



Donaghmoyne Parish.

4th Sunday of Advent - 18th December 2022.

Mission Statement: Our Parish is a Christ-centred community. In Baptism, we are challenged by the Spirit to live and share the Gospel message. Through proclaiming the Gospel message by Word and Action, our community in celebrating the Liturgy, working for Justice, Charity, Ecumenism, the Needy and Vulnerable and Young People, we extend our love and care to all people, providing our support in renewing and deepening our faith. We value the gifts and talents of each of our Parishioners and invite them to use these in responding to Christ's invitation to all of us to follow Him in spreading the Good News.

Parish Bulletin: Now available on www.donaghmoyne.com.
Parish Radio: St. Patrick's Broomfield: 102.4FM. St. Lastra's Donaghmoyne: 87.5FM.
St. Mary's Lisdoonan: 107FM.
Parish Priest: Fr. Michael Daly P.P: Phone: 042 9743617 Email: donaghmoynep@gmail.com
Church Eir Codes: St. Lastra's Donaghmoyne: A81P978. St. Mary's Lisdoonan: A81DP44.
St. Patrick's Broomfield: A75X977.

Donaghmoyne Masses.

Sunday 18th December 10.00am.

A.M. Deceased Connolly family, Cloughvalley & Cordrummands & Paddy & Maura, Lynatt.

A.M. Frank Keenan & members of the Keenan & Martin families.

A.M. Edward & Mary Hamill. Requested mass for their son Sean & deceased members of the Hamill family, Monagirr.

2nd A.M. Ena Mc Daide, Beagh.

A.M. Tommy Callaghan, Donaghmoyne.

A.M. Laurence, Sarah & Patrick Markey, Rosdreenagh, daughters Monica & Kathleen & daughter in law Bernadette.

A.M. Alice & Johnny Greene & remembrance for Padraig Connolly, Carga.

A.M. Tommy Duffy, Lisnagunnion.

Saturday 24th December – Christmas Eve 6 pm.

Sunday 25th December – Christmas Day 9.00am.

A.M. Patrick, Margaret, Annie & Simon Ruddy, Lisnamoyle & Mary & James Maguire, Donaghmoyne.

A.M. James & Mary Traynor, Lisnamoyle & deceased members of the Carolan family, Magheraclone.

Above Masses will be on the Parish Radio & Live Streamed from Saint Lastra's Church.

Lisdoonan Masses

Saturday 17th December 7.30pm.

Remembrance Mass: Francie Rooney, Crossalare. A.M. Gerry Daly, Bocks Middle & deceased members of the Daly family.

Saturday 24th December -Christmas Eve 5.00pm

Sunday 25th December –Christmas day 10.00am.

A.M. Patrick & Catherine Finnegan, Peaste & deceased members of the Finnegan family.

Above Masses will be on the Parish Radio & Live Streamed fro St. Mary's Church. Lisdoonan.

Broomfield Masses.

Sunday 18th December 11.30am.

Remembrance Mass: Finnegan family, Edengilrevy & deceased members of the Finnegan & Kelly families.

A.M. Peter, Mary, Gerry & Elizabeth Mc Ginn, Drumgoose & Sylvester Mc Ginn, Toome.

A.M. Jack Burns & deceased members of the Burns family, Derry island.

A.M. John & Bridget Duffy, Sean, Pierce & Nula Duffy, Knockreagh & deceased members of the Duffy family.

Monday – Friday 9.00am Mass

Saturday 24th December - Christmas Eve 7.30pm.

Sunday 25th December 11.00am.

Remembrance Mass: Margaret & Mick Fee & deceased members of the Fee family, Cornahawla.

A.M. Sadie McNally, Drumhariff North.

Above Masses will be on the Parish Radio & Live Streamed.

Booking of Masses: If possible, please book your Masses by E-mailing the Parish Office at donaghmoynep@gmail.com or by ringing the Parish Office. 042- 9743617.

Any Thursday between 10am and 1pm.

Baptism's – St Patrick's Church, Broomfield

Sunday 1st & Saturday 21st January 2023

Sunday 5th & Saturday 18th February 2023 at 12.30pm.

Book by Emailing the Parish Office at

donaghmoynep@gmail.com or

Phone 042-9743617 any Thursday 10am – 1pm

Masses in the Parish for Christmas:

Lisdoonan – Saturday Christmas Eve 5.00pm. Sunday Christmas Day 10.00am.

Donaghmoyne – Saturday Christmas Eve 6.00pm. Sunday Christmas Day 9.00 am.

Broomfield – Saturday Christmas Eve 7.30pm. Sunday Christmas Day 11.00 am.

Confessions for Christmas: Lisdoonan on Saturday 17th December after the 7.30pm Mass

Donaghmoyne: Wednesday 21st December at 7.00pm. Broomfield Wednesday 21st December at 8.00pm.

Penance Service – Will take place in **St. Joseph's Church, Carrickmacross on this Sunday 18th December at 5.00pm** with a number of Priests available for Confessions and in **St. Mary's Church, Castleblayney at 6.00pm on Sunday 18th December** with a number of Priests available for Confessions.

Church Collection: In aid of St. Vincent de Paul. At Broomfield & Donaghmoyne churches.

Collections at Mass: We are resuming taking up Collections at week-end Masses as is happening in other parishes. As before we ask people at the end of a seat where the collection bag is to pass along at collection time and when complete, a person near the end of the seat could bring it to the altar. Sincere thanks to all who contribute to the Parish in these challenging times, both at Mass and by dropping envelopes in the Parish Office.

Synodal Pathway: The document for the European stage of the Synod was published recently and is available on www.clogherdiocese.ie and www.synod.ie. The next stage will be a European Synod in Prague in February 2023, leading to a 2-session Synod in Rome in October 2023 and October 2024. This will be alongside and informing our own Synodal Pathway here in Ireland.

Clogher don Óige: Are bringing a group of young adults (18+) on pilgrimage to **World Youth Day in Portugal next summer**. Details are being finalised, dates of travel approx. July 25th - August 7th, with time spent in Porto, Lisbon, and a trip to Fatima. See www.clogherdonoise.org/wyd for more information and submit an expression of interest.

St. Vincent de Paul Annual Appeal for Christmas: St. Vincent de Paul continue to do wonderful work in providing for the neediest in local communities. We encourage people to support their Christmas Appeal these challenging times, when huge demands are put on their resources during the Christmas period.

Intensive Christmas Revision Course: In Junior Cycle Higher & Leaving Cert Ordinary Level **Maths** will be held over the Christmas holiday period in Killanny. Call 0879138261 for more details.

M.S. Ireland Sponsored Walk: In aid of Castleblayney M.S. Branch on 26th December. Assembling Toome Centre at 12 noon. Please support.

Mary's Meals – Big Family Christmas: International school feeding charity, Mary's Meals, are inviting you to join their Big Family Christmas celebrations. A range of gifts are available, which will not only provide you with a wonderful Christmas gift for a loved one, but will also provide life changing school meals for a child living in poverty. For just €18.30 a place can be set at their virtual Big Family Christmas dinner table, to feed a child for an entire school year! This place setting can be printed or emailed to someone as a special gift. Range of other gift cards is also available: From providing 100 meals for €9 to funding a cooking pot and stove for €250, and everything in between! Gift cards are available to download at www.marysmeals.ie or can be sent via post by calling 01 853 5163.

Youth advocate programme: Are recruiting advocates to work with young people and their families locally. Flexible role, hourly rate and training provided. Driver's licence and 3 months experience working with children in any capacity (including family) required. If interested visit yapireland.ie and go to Work With Us - Careers - Advocate Vacancies. Closing date 9th Jan.

Lisdoonan Vintage club: Are holding a threshing and vintage display day on the 29th December 2022 at Lisdoonan Community Centre at 1pm.

Be Alert: There continues to be fraudulent scams and alerts via telephone calls emails etc. Please continue to be aware and cautious of any unexpected activity or communication to you & to your vulnerable family members.

Christmas 2022: Christmas for us in the northern hemisphere will always be associated with short hours of daylight, a watery sun giving little heat, rain, sleet and even snow, all of which add up to colder weather. We try to put on more and warmer clothes, but we need heat & food to keep us warm.

This particular Christmas, due to factors beyond our control, providing any kind of heat in our homes has become very expensive. Add to that food, which enables us to generate some body- heat, has also increased enormously. The poor and the homeless among us find themselves in the worst of all situations. The Covid years have shown that we do look out for our neighbours and for those who most need help, like the thousands of Ukrainian refugees driven out of their country with practically nothing.

The fact that Jesus choose to be born in mid-Winter, during a census-taking meant that Mary and Joseph had to travel many days journey on foot and in the cold in order to reach their place of registration in Bethlehem. This must indicate that God meant his Son to be identified with the poorest and neediest of his time and for all ages.

Minor Injury Unit at Monaghan Hospital: (047 38835) Hours have been extended – we are now open 08.00 – 20.00 (Mon – Fri) Closed Weekends/Public & Bank Holidays. Average time in Department – 1 Hour Patients over 5 years - We treat X Rays as needed, Broken bones, Dislocations, Foreign bodies, Sprains & Strains, Wounds, Minor chest injuries, Minor scalds & burns, Facial & eye injuries.

Special Monaghan / Fermanagh Pilgrimage to Fatima: Ex Dublin for Feast Day of Saint Anthony 9th -14th June 2023 visit Saint Anthony's Baptismal Font in Lisbon and house where he was born contact James Treacy 061921470 or 00353 61921470.

Winter 2022 General Meeting of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference

Members of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference gathered in-person this week in Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, for their Winter 2022 General Meeting. The President of the Conference is Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh and the Vice-President is Archbishop Dermot Farrell of Dublin. During the meeting Mass was celebrated in the College Chapel and prayers were offered for the victims and families of the tragedy on 7 October in Creeslough, Co Donegal; for peace in Ukraine, and, for all who have died from or are suffering long-term effects of the corona virus.

Topics discussed by the Bishops' Conference included the **plight of immigrants and emigrants**, the work of **the Bishops' Alcohol and Drug Initiative**, **army chaplaincy** as well as:

- **Praying for peace and supporting the people of Ukraine**
- **Bishops: "At this time in particular the cry of the poor must be heard!"**
- **Political uncertainty in Northern Ireland: "A shared and peaceful future can only be built on the foundations of a shared and compassionate present"**
 - **50th anniversary of the Ballymascanlon talks**
 - **'Take the Risk for Christ' – promoting vocations to diocesan priesthood in 2023**
 - **Bishops progress lay Ministry of Catechist**
 - **Safeguarding Children in the Church**
 - **Update on the Synodal Pathway of the Church**
 - **Bishops commend Irish negotiating team at COP27**
- **Bishops express concern about escalating hunger crisis in the Horn of Africa**
 - **Advent 2022 – the Season of Hope and Preparation**
 - **Catholic Schools Week 2023: 'Walking Together in Faith & Love'**
 - **Appointments**
- **In Memoriam**

- **Praying for peace and supporting the people of Ukraine**

In solidarity with our Ukrainian sisters and brothers living among us, Bishops invited parishes and individuals across Ireland, to join them in prayer for the suffering of Ukrainian people at this time:

В очікуванні народження Князя Миру молимося за мир для народу України. Нехай Господь утішить вигнаних з рідних домівок, дасть притулок біженцям, укріпить тих, які бояться і помилує мертвих. Нехай ті, хто прагне насильства і руйнування, прислухаються до голосу Божого, який говорить усім: 'Блаженні миротворці, бо вони синами Божими назвуться.'

This prayer translates into the English language as follows:

As we await the birth of the Prince of Peace we pray for peace for the people of Ukraine. Lord, comfort those driven from their homes, shelter the refugee, strengthen the fearful and have mercy on the dead.

May those intent on violence and destruction listen to the voice of God who says to all, 'Blessed are the peacemakers they shall be called children of God'.

Bishops discussed the war in Ukraine and reiterated the appeal by the Holy Father Pope Francis for an immediate end to the horrific loss of life, daily bombardment, displacement of families and destruction of property, stating, "Human life is sacred. This invasion and aggression reminds us of the fragility of peace, even in Europe, a place that has experienced peace for much of the past seven decades."

Bishops expressed gratitude for the outpouring of solidarity, support and welcome from individuals, parishes and communities across Ireland to the people of Ukraine who have come to live amongst us. Bishops ask all Christians to join in daily spiritual and practical efforts in support of a ceasefire, humanitarian outreach and the immediate laying down of weapons.

Bishops' Conference's practical support for Ukrainian refugees

Since the start of the war in Ukraine on 24 February, and in response to the needs of Ukrainian refugees coming to Ireland, the Bishops' Conference has been working with funders, including The Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation and Benefact Trust, to secure funding of over €230,000 for Church projects across Ireland for the benefit of thousands of Ukrainian refugees. These projects include:

- Working, in tandem with the Irish Red Cross and county councils, to upgrade parochial houses to provide appropriate accommodation to Ukrainian families.
- Supporting the provision of services and supports to Ukrainians such as English language classes, information sessions, respite activities, Ukrainian language resources, and the purchase of basic goods.
- Obtaining a grant for the Ukrainian Church, based in the Parish of Donnycarney in the Archdiocese of Dublin, to provide support to over 3,500 Ukrainians that it is engaging with regularly.

€4,532,265 raised from collection at Masses in March in support of Ukrainians

Following the special collection at Masses on 27 March last, €4,532,265 has been raised to date for charitable projects to assist refugees and those remaining in Ukraine. Bishops stated that, "it is inspiring that people all over Ireland have responded with customary generosity in support of this humanitarian crisis. We commend Trócaire for assisting with our response to the crisis through its partners Caritas Ukraine and Caritas Poland which have a strong presence in the region and can use resources strategically to the greatest effect."

Bishops said, "At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus far from His home, and Irish people know well the experience of the migrant. This year we have many new arrivals and refugees in our midst, who have much to offer but need our reassurance and welcome. We ask of our local faith communities to be aware of the needs of our new neighbors and to extend the love of Christ to all this Christmas."

• **Bishops: "At this time in particular the cry of the poor must be heard"**

Bishops discussed the effects of the current energy and cost of living crisis on people across the island of Ireland. Bishops stated, "all over the country, in the face of cold weather, many people are forced to make disturbing decisions - and trade-off choices - around food, heating or other necessary and basic requirements in life. The situation for many will be more acute this Christmas as evidenced by the increase in the numbers of people seeking assistance from our food banks and our other charitable outreaches. To that end, we urge people to give what they can to support the outstanding work of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, Crosscare in Dublin, and other charities and local pastoral initiatives to support families and individuals with practical material help and advice.

"We commend those parishes all over the country that have undertaken initiatives to help the ever-increasing numbers experiencing food and heat poverty. Many of our parishes have also welcomed people seeking refuge from war and persecution. This is Catholic Social Teaching in action: to read the signs of the times and to respond. In this way we radiate the Christian message of love and respect for the human dignity of all."

During their discussions, Bishops noted the ever-growing need to tackle the root causes of poverty across Ireland. These root causes include homelessness; child poverty; the cost of housing; low rates of pay, whereby purchasing power has been further eroded by rapid inflation; food poverty; and, the lack of access to educational supports for many children and young people. Recent figures from the Government's Central Statistics Office showed that in 2022, 17% of the population (Republic only) has experienced 'enforced deprivation', including almost a quarter of a million children. Such deprivation refers to the inability to afford two or more of eleven basic necessities such as nutritious food, adequate heating and suitable clothing. The economic and social hardship of people living in Northern Ireland was also discussed, particularly concerning the failure to have the political institutions up and running in the interest of the common good. This has resulted in not only a political impasse, but has added to the hardship being suffered by so many families, with one-in-four children growing up in poverty. Practical initiatives, including access to free school meals, support for school uniforms, and lifting the benefit cap for families with more than two children were mentioned in light of the lack of certainty of funding for these schemes beyond March 2023.

Bishops stated, "The current situation facing society is not morally acceptable in an Ireland with such abundant wealth and increasing revenue income for the Exchequer. The cry of the poor needs to be heard! There is an immediate requirement for the prioritization of public policy measures that address poverty in all of its forms so as to protect people on low income and the vulnerable. This is an absolute minimum and yet is not being

delivered upon.”

- **Political uncertainty in Northern Ireland: “A shared and peaceful future can only be built on the foundations of a shared and compassionate present”**

Bishops expressed concern about the ongoing political uncertainty in Northern Ireland, stating, “the lack of devolved government and a functioning elected Assembly in Stormont is adding to the many others challenges that are currently facing families which include soaring prices for essential items and the associated financial pressures for those on low incomes with few savings. We call on all elected representatives to keep their focus on serving the Common Good: a shared and peaceful future can only be built on the foundations of a shared and compassionate present.”

Bishops encouraged parishes to support and promote initiatives that can counteract poverty and loneliness this winter such as visiting or calling their vulnerable or elderly neighbors, saying, “there is an added strength when parishes and congregations work together in the service of their communities.”

Protecting unborn life

Bishops reiterated their profound sadness at the prioritization and ring fencing of funding for abortion services by the Westminster government, stating, “In the face of a serious lack of funding for life-saving health services, we are now witnessing financial resources being diverted and ring-fenced to end life before the unborn baby sees the light of day. We call for a reversal of this public policy approach which runs sharply counter to fostering a culture of life in our society.”

- **50th anniversary of the Ballymascanlon talks**

2023 will mark the 50th anniversary of the Ballymascanlon talks that saw the Catholic Church develop strong ecumenical relations that have grown over the past fifty years. An ecumenical joint service of thanksgiving will be held in Saint Anne’s Cathedral, Belfast, on 22 January at 3.30 pm with Archbishop Eamon Martin and Rev Harold Good preaching. The Irish Inter-Church Meeting gathers for an annual conference and the Inter-Church Meeting, made up of Church leaders, meets four times a year. The recent annual conference with participants from various Churches across the island was entitled ‘Creatively reconfiguring our post-pandemic understanding of church’.

- **‘Take the Risk for Christ’ – promoting vocations to diocesan priesthood in 2023**

Bishops prayed for vocations to the priesthood and discussed the need to encourage men to consider the priesthood as a vocation to help evangelize and serve the People of God in Ireland, proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, and minister the Sacraments. Bishops noted that feedback from newly ordained priests indicated that their vocation was greatly influenced by encouragement received from a priest who spoke to them about the priesthood.

The Bishops’ Conference decided to organize a year to promote vocations to the diocesan priesthood on the theme: ‘Take the Risk for Christ’. This year-long awareness campaign will run from Good Shepherd Sunday, 30 April 2023. Next 30 April also marks the 60th anniversary of the initiation of the annual World Day of Prayer for Vocations, instituted by Saint Pope Paul VI in 1963 during the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. On 25 April next, the Feast of Saint Mark the Evangelist, a conference will be hosted immediately preceding the Year of Vocation on ‘Evangelization and Vocation’ at the national seminary of Saint Patrick’s College, Maynooth. It is planned to host events to run each month of the Year of Vocation in parishes and pilgrim sites around the country to include resources for homes and schools. The National Vocations Office is responsible for managing the Year of Vocations. To support this initiative, Bishops invite families and parishes to pray the well-known prayer for vocations composed by Saint Pope John XXIII:

‘O Jesus, send labourers into your fields, which are awaiting holy apostles, saintly priests, heroic missionaries and dedicated sisters and brothers. Enkindle in the hearts of men and women the spark of a vocation. Grant that Christian families may desire to give to your Church helpers in the work of tomorrow. Amen.’

- **Bishops progress lay Ministry of Catechist**

Following on from its decision earlier this year to establish a working group to reflect on, and develop, the lay Ministry of Catechist in Ireland, the Bishops' Conference welcomed the draft national norms and guidelines *Fan into a Flame: The Ministry of Catechist in the Catholic Church in Ireland*. These have been prepared by a working group, chaired by Bishop Kevin Doran, which included lay people, religious, and clergy. As a next step, the Bishops recommended that this draft document be made available for a wider, synodal-style consultation and reflection.

Bishops said, "the Ministry of Catechist is a recognized vocational lay ministry which provides a further step towards the Church in Ireland embracing the challenge of the new evangelization, wherein all of the baptized are imbued by the gifts of the Holy Spirit and participate fully in the life and mission of the Church. The Ministry calls on all baptized women and men to be living witnesses and mediators of the faith in their local communities. Their function is to accompany, teach, and incorporate new disciples into the Church and to be people who keep the memory of God alive in our time. In the early Church, the married couple Aquila and Priscilla, who worked with Saint Paul, are considered models for the Catechist (Acts 18)."

- **Safeguarding Children in the Church**

Judge Garrett Sheehan, Chair of the National Board, and Teresa, advised the Bishops' Conference on activities engaging the current work of the Board, including data protection and information sharing; learning from national and international investigations and reports into abuse; the ongoing work of reviewing policy and standards for safeguarding in the Church in Ireland. In relation to the status of safeguarding reviews, all twenty-six dioceses on the island have now completed or applied for a further review of safeguarding practice conducted by the National Board. The majority of these reviews have already been completed.

Bishops discussed with the National Board representatives the priority of reaching out to victims and survivors of abuse and of hearing the voice of survivors in policy-making and in providing feedback on the ongoing work of safeguarding. It was noted that in the Synodal Process to date, the importance of addressing the 'open wound' associated with abuse has been emphasised. The work of fostering atonement, healing and reconciliation is made even more urgent by the shocking testimonies of abuse survivors recently highlighted in the media. Bishops noted that in the *National Synthesis* document of the Synod, published in August 2022 stated:

"There was a palpable sense that despite many efforts by the Church, a 'reckoning' had not yet taken place, and the [synodal](#) process generated a clear imperative to place this issue at the heart of any Church renewal and reform. A submission noted: *We must pledge ourselves to journey with survivors, to meet with them, preferably in small groups where dialogue is possible and opens us to the presence of the Spirit.*"

To this end, Bishops undertook to engage with survivors in developing a process of dialogue which will be helpful and supportive of healing. Bishops will make contact with the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI) to take this process forward in 2023.

- **Update on the Synodal Pathway of the Church**

Bishops discussed the next steps for both the Synodal Pathway of the Catholic Church in Ireland and the Universal Synod. Bishops welcomed the extension of the Universal Synod, announced by Pope Francis on 16 October, to include 2023 and 2024. This a further sign that the Synodal Pathway is a process based on listening and discerning more deeply, a consensus-building approach, rather than a single event or events.

Continental Stage of the Synod 2021-2024

The Working Document for the Continental Stage of the Synod (DCS) was launched by the General Secretariat of the Synod on 27 October last. The Universal Church is now in a period of reflection and is invited to reflect upon three questions posed in §106 of the DCS in order to facilitate a "circular" dialogue between the local churches and the Universal Church. These deepened reflections will be brought by delegates to the Continental Assemblies being held around the world between January and March 2023. The Continental Assembly for Europe is being held from 5 to 12 February 2023 in Prague. A reflection guide, and other resources, has been prepared by the Irish Synodal Pathway to support this reflective process which can be accessed on www.synod.ie

The four delegates travelling from Ireland to attend the Continental Assembly in Prague are Archbishop Eamon Martin; Ms Juliann Moran, General Secretary of the Irish Synodal Pathway; Dr Nicola Brady, Chairperson of the Steering Committee; and, Father Eamonn Fitzgibbon, Convener of the Task Group for the Irish Synodal

Pathway. A further ten delegates will attend the plenary sessions of the Assembly online.

Integrating the Synodal Pathway of the Catholic Church in Ireland with the Universal Synod

Adapting the questions raised in §106 of the DCS, diocesan delegates and representatives in Ireland have been invited to read through three documents in a conversational way during this time of reflection: their original submission, the *National Synthesis*, and the DCS. They have been asked to submit their reflections by 22 December next to the General Secretary. The deepened reflections will be brought to the Continental Assembly in Prague but will also be used to further the work of the Irish Synodal Pathway.

Next Steps – Synodal Pathway in Ireland

Research is now being commissioned to consult with those who led local listening sessions during the diocesan phase of the Universal Synod so the ground can be prepared for the National Synodal Pathway. This research will provide a framework for what supports need to be in place for local leadership to improve engagement in the next stages of the process, to deliver formation programmes and resources, and to strengthen the sustainability of the Synodal Pathway in Ireland. The leadership of the National Steering Committee has been restructured to facilitate, support and guide across the different areas of work: Dr Brady and Father Declan Hurley will serve as co-Chairs, while Bishop Brendan Leahy and Mrs Paula McKeon will serve as deputy Chairs.

- **Bishops commend Irish negotiating team at COP27**

Bishop stated, “Pope Francis, in his 2015 encyclical letter on the environment *Laudato Si’* (*Praised Be*), reminds us of our calling to care for our Common Home which is now more urgent as we watch with trepidation the increasingly ominous signals of climate breakdown. The latest attempts to address our climate crisis were discussed at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), in November, in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.

“COP27 addressed the fact that the extreme events inflicted on the most climatically vulnerable countries are increasingly attributable to the emissions from the developed world. The success of the developing countries in obtaining agreement for the establishment of a ‘Loss and Damage’ facility is to be welcomed. This positive development is in accord with a *Laudato Si’* central theme of the interconnectedness of social justice, inter-generational justice and climate justice. The failure of the developed world to accept financial responsibility for this has been for long an obstacle to progress.

“The successful efforts of the Irish negotiating team in getting the beginnings of a Loss & Damage facility established are therefore to be commended. Many issues remain to be teased out: who will contribute to such a fund; which vulnerable countries will qualify to benefit; how will individual events be classified as climate-change-induced; how will slow onset events, such as droughts, be considered alongside short-term catastrophes such as floods? These will require careful scientific and ethical consideration and will clearly be subject to further negotiations in future COPs.

“Irish people have always shown great compassion for the victims of famine, flood, and conflict in other countries. With the increase in media broadcasting and reporting about the effects of extreme weather and climate change, now is the time for greater solidarity. The UN resolution of 1970 - calling on countries to allocate 0.7% of their national income to official development assistance - remains an unachieved challenge for both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland.”

Arrange a screening of *The Letter* - inspired by *Laudato Si’*

Bishops stated, “COP27 heard heart-wrenching stories of people flooded out of their island homes by rising sea levels; of children starving in the Horn of Africa where the rains have failed for the fourth consecutive year; and, of more than 1,000 excess deaths last summer from heatwaves and fires amongst our own European neighbours. This harsh reality is stunningly reflected in the recently released human-interest film, *The Letter*, inspired by *Laudato Si’*. It tells the story of four people, who, in conversation with Pope Francis, reveal their roles in caring more deeply for our Common Home. It is an invitation to each one of us to take up the challenge of addressing the ecological crisis in our own local communities. Therefore, we invite our parishes, educational institutions, retreat centres, community centres and households to arrange a screening of *The Letter*. It provides the opportunity for a conversation starter – beginning where you are – about how we can all use our gifts and talents to contribute to solutions that are needed urgently in order to protect our Common Home.” To arrange for a parish screening of *The Letter* please contact jane.mellet@trocaire.org This film is also available on YouTube <https://theletterfilm.org>

- **Bishops express concern about escalating hunger crisis in the Horn of Africa**

Bishops expressed concern that the hunger crisis in the Horn of Africa is deepening, with ongoing drought and conflict tipping the region into a potential disaster. Trócaire continues to support hundreds of thousands of people who are in dire need living in Somalia, Ethiopia and South Sudan. With crops failing and livestock dying, the number in urgent need of help in the Horn of Africa is growing. This figure was around 13 million at the start of the year, but UN agencies estimate this number to be now around 21 million. In Gedo Region in southern Somalia, Trócaire is supporting more than 20,000 people a month and it is reporting that more international aid is needed as people, including children, are dying from malnutrition. Famine may be declared in parts of Somalia in the coming weeks. The main driver of the crisis is climate change, compounded by conflict, rising food and fuel prices due to the war in Ukraine and the after effects of Covid-19.

Trócaire's 2022 'Christmas Gifts of Love' to support communities in crisis

Bishops expressed their gratitude to everyone across the island for their purchase of more than one million life-changing 'Gifts of Love' since they were launched by Trócaire in 2000. Bishops stated, "This year the number of gifts sold since the year 2,000 has passed the one million mark, an incredible milestone and testament to the extraordinary generosity of the people of Ireland. The 'Gifts of Love' remain hugely popular with Trócaire supporters amidst all of the consumerism and spending associated with Christmas, and the gifts give people an opportunity to buy a meaningful present from as little as €5 that will change the life of somebody in dire need."

For Christmas 2022, the 'Gifts of Love' collection includes two new gifts:

- the Gift of Winter Essentials (€25) to support Syrian families forced to flee their homes to refugee camps in neighbouring Lebanon; and,
- the Family Food Basket (€35) which provides basic food essentials and high nutrient food for malnourished children facing catastrophic hunger in the Horn of Africa due to the ongoing drought.

The broad range of gifts also include dignity packs to help young girls out of period poverty (€10) and mental health support for women and children traumatized by the ongoing conflict in Gaza (€50). Gifts can be purchased on trocaire.org/gifts or Phone 1800 408 408 in the Republic and for Northern Ireland 0800 912 1200.

- **Advent 2022 – the Season of Hope and Preparation**

Bishops stated, "we have now begun our Advent journey, a time of patient waiting and joyful hope. We look forward to the celebration of Christmas with quiet expectation and turn our hearts to the Lord with confidence and trust. We are thankful for the continuing commitment of so many in our parishes to ensuring that our churches remain safe places where people can gather in confidence to worship. It is important that we remain vigilant, conscious of the threat posed by the Corona virus, its variants and other respiratory illnesses. It is important to continue to take the steps to protect our own health and the health of others. The coming of Christ that we celebrate at Christmas brought light into a darkened world, 'a light that darkness could not overpower'. However, this time of year also brings great difficulty to many in terms of surviving and staying warm. We urge those who can to respond generously to the Christmas appeals of Trócaire, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, Crosscare and other charities that bring hope to the lives of those families bearing the brunt of the cost of living and energy crises. Through the coming days of Advent may our hearts be open to the grace and power of the Lord and filled with joy when we celebrate His birth."

Digital Advent Calendar on catholicbishops.ie

A popular resource for prayer and reflection during Advent is the interactive digital calendar on www.catholicbishops.ie. Now in its ninth year, the theme for this year's calendar is on #Synodality. Each day a virtual Advent calendar door can be opened to access faith content and a brief personal video reflection. Bishops encourage parishes to avail of the digital calendar which has proven to be a well-received resource for families and schools during this holy season.

- **Catholic Schools Week 2023: 'Walking Together in Faith & Love'**

Bishops commended the theme for Catholic Schools Week 2023, 'Walking Together in Faith & Love', which draws on three features of the Synodal Pathway: Communion, Participation and Mission. Across Ireland, CSW 2023 will run from Sunday 29 January to Sunday 5 February, and it will be anchored on the *memoria* of Saint John Bosco on 31 January. CSW resources will reflect the theme of the week 'Walking Together in Faith & Love', which is dedicated to celebrating the gift of Catholic education and recognizing the love and generosity of the entire school community: student, staff and home. CSW resources will draw on scriptural reflection on

journey, prayer, student voice, and (spiritual) wellbeing, with the following daily emphases:

Monday: Walking Together in Faith

Tuesday: Walking Together in Love (*In our school community, themes of inclusion*)

Wednesday: Walking Together to Celebrate – Grandparents’ Day (*Celebrating those who help us on the journey of faith, themes of inclusion of the elderly in society [Pope Francis’ Message for the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly 2022](#)*)

Thursday: Walking Together to Transform our World (*Themes of environment - Laudato Si’ – and Mission*)

Friday: Walking Together in Hope

Appointments

Bishops congratulated and offered their prayerful good wishes to Archbishop Noel Treanor, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Down & Connor, on his appointment by Pope Francis on 26 November as Apostolic Nuncio to the European Union, and to Bishop-elect Niall Coll, having been appointed by the Holy Father on 28 October as Bishop of Ossory. On behalf of the Bishops’ Conference, Archbishop Eamon Martin thanked Bishop Denis Nulty of Kildare & Leighlin for his pastoral care, ministry and leadership in his former role as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Ossory.

In Memoriam

With Christmas approaching, we as Christians keep especially in our thoughts those who have been bereaved over the past year, and we pray for the gifts of healing and hope for all. During their meeting Bishops prayed for the happy repose of the souls of former Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Patrick Coveney (RIP 22 October); Dom Placid Murray OSB, monk of Glenstal Abbey (RIP 31 October); Archbishop Mario Conti, Archbishop Emeritus of Glasgow (RIP 8 November); Bishop Martin Drennan, Bishop Emeritus of Galway (26 November); and Ms Eileen Sparling (RIP 29 November), former past president of Saint Joseph’s Young Priest’s Society. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha dilíse.

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