



# SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

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Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference  
Columba Centre, Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co Kildare

## Archbishop of Armagh calls for network of support for family

Archbishop Eamon Martin has said that one of the greatest learnings for him at the Synod on the Vocation and Mission of the Family was that “the family is not simply the object of ministry and evangelisation, but it is a powerful agent of evangelisation”. Archbishop Eamon made these comments in his keynote address to a conference on ‘Pope Francis and the Future of the Family in Ireland’ hosted jointly by *The Irish Catholic* and the Iona Institute in Dublin on 30 January. In his address Archbishop Eamon expressed his hope that “the Catholic Church in Ireland will respond to the Synod in three similar ways: firstly, by presenting a clear, positive and challenging vision of the family; secondly, by developing effective networks of support, encouragement and advocacy for the family; thirdly, by ensuring that there is a solid foundation of prayer in and for the family in this country.” He said that: “Catholic family support groups might also provide positive pastoral outreach to families who struggle with aspects of the Church's teaching, including those with gay members. Catholic family support groups will grow if we begin by encouraging cells or clusters of Catholic families within parishes and dioceses - 'families of families'.” He also suggested that new movements, cells and associations of families can also become powerful advocates for the Catholic understanding and vision of marriage and the family in society. Archbishop Eamon's address is available to read on [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie).



## NEWS SNIPPETS

- Pope Francis' message for World Day of the Sick on 11 February reflects on the theme 'Entrusting Oneself to the Merciful Jesus like Mary: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5)'. It is available on [catholicbishops.ie](http://catholicbishops.ie).
- Archbishop Diarmuid Martin will launch Radio Maria Ireland in its Dublin studios on 11 February.
- In his homily at Mass to mark the 10th anniversary of Pieta House Archbishop Diarmuid Martin said: "Pieta House is a story of hope and purpose. It is a story about the burdens and the demons which weigh people down, but above all it is a story which sees in every person who crosses the door of Pieta House as someone with unique talent and promise and purpose." Read the full text on [dublindiocese.ie](http://dublindiocese.ie).
- Read Bishop Kevin Doran's IEC2016 Cebu blog on [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie).
- See our 'Lent' Facebook page with prayers, resources and events.

## Lent 2016 : A moment to celebrate and experience God's mercy



In his message for Lent 2016, which begins on Ash Wednesday 10 February, Pope Francis asks us to live Lent more intensely as a privileged moment to celebrate and experience God's mercy: "God's mercy transforms human hearts; it enables us, through the experience of a faithful love, to become merciful in turn." Full text on [catholicbishops.ie](http://catholicbishops.ie).

## Housing Crisis should be key issue in 2016 General Election

Four Church-related social justice organisations have called on all candidates and voters in the forthcoming General Election to make housing and homelessness key issues in the campaign. The four groups point out that while homelessness is obviously the most visible and severe feature of the housing crisis, the reality is that there are tens of thousands of households in Ireland today experiencing some form of housing distress. Read the statement from the Council for Justice and Peace of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference; the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul; the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice and the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice on [catholicbishops.ie](http://catholicbishops.ie).

 **Pope Francis Tweet of the Month:** "In today's society, in which forgiveness is so rare, mercy is ever more important." Follow Pope Francis on Twitter @Pontifex and @news\_va.

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