

# ARCHDIOCESE OF CASHEL & EMLY

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## A MESSAGE FOR CHRISTMAS 2020 FROM ARCHBISHOP KIERAN O'REILLY

Dear Friends in Christ,

I take this opportunity as we draw closer to the celebration of Christmas to wish you and your families the peace and joy that the birth of Jesus, Our Saviour, brings to our world. Christmas is traditionally one of the most joyful times of the year. However, as we know, our celebrations are shrouded this year in anxiety and concern because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The virus has invaded our lives over the past months and turned our world upside down.

As a result, we are now, more than ever, aware of how fragile our lives are, how inter-connected our world is. In our globalised world the reality of this pandemic is that it has touched the lives of peoples of many nations around the globe. We spare a thought for our missionaries from Ireland working throughout the world to bring the Christmas message of Peace and Love.

Our normal religious and social patterns have been changed. For our church communities this has meant the cancellation or postponement of many religious ceremonies – baptism, sacrament of reconciliation, first holy communion, confirmation and weddings. My thanks to all who have shown resilience and patience in the face of such challenges.

To those among us who have lost beloved family members it has been a particularly difficult year, as funerals of loved ones could be celebrated with only a few family and friends present. Even now, we know we are not through this difficult moment in our lives - the most recent government regulations demand more sacrifices from all of us in the interests of our care for each other.

This is the context in which we celebrate Christmas this year. As we celebrate the coming of the infant of hope into our world, we are reminded by St. Paul in the letter to the Romans of what his coming as a human being has meant:

**“For I am convinced that neither death nor life...will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord... In all things we are more than conquerors through him who loves us.”**