

Archbishop Eamon Martin launches online Advent 2017 Calendar

- **“As Advent is the season of preparation for the coming of our Lord, I encourage the faithful, notwithstanding our hectic schedule over the coming weeks, to make time to pray – alone and with loved ones – and by so doing to draw nearer to Christ.”**
- **“Let’s Talk Family, Let’s Be Family this Advent” – Archbishop Eamon Martin**

Ahead of the first Sunday of Advent which takes place this Sunday, 3 December, Archbishop Eamon Martin has launched a specially commissioned 2017 online Advent Calendar. This date also marks the beginning of the Church’s new year.

The online Advent Calendar will offer the opening of a virtual door each day during the season of Advent. Behind each door there will be content aimed at assisting people to pray and to reflect on how best we can put Christ to the centre of our Christmas preparations during this special liturgical season. This year’s Advent calendar will provide a special focus on family as part of ongoing preparations for the hosting of the World Meeting of Families 2018 in Dublin next August. There will be family prayers and suggestions for acts of kindness or charity that family members will be encouraged to take on during the month of December.

The calendar will go live simultaneously on the Catholic Bishops and the World Meeting of Families 2018 websites (www.catholicbishops.ie and www.worldmeeting2018.ie) on the first Sunday of Advent.

Launching the 2017 online calendar, Archbishop Eamon said, “The season of Advent marks the beginning of the Catholic year and the time of spiritual preparation for the Lord’s coming at Christmas. It is a time of waiting, conversion and hope. Advent also prepares us for the second coming of Christ at the end of time. As Christians, we must always be prepared for the coming of the Lord – ‘You must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect’ [Mt 24:37-44]. Preparation does not happen at once but over time and so each day of Advent amounts to a period of time which allows us to journey and reflect on the joy of the Gospel. Our online calendar is a helpful resource in this journey.”

Archbishop Eamon continued, “Advent offers us a perfect opportunity to reflect on the Gospel of the Family as we continue our preparations for the World Meeting of Families 2018. Pope Francis has described the family as the first school, the nearest hospital and the best place to grow old. This Advent, many parishes are continuing to reflect on the Amoris Programme and the *Amoris: Let’s Talk Family, Let’s Be Family* pastoral programme for the WMOF2018. The season of Advent offers all of us a period of time out to reflect on the gifts of our families and what they offer to us in our parishes, schools and in society.

“I particularly welcome the inclusion this year of content from Pope Francis’ recent Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love)* in the 2017 Advent Calendar. I invite everyone during the Advent season to visit our online calendar, which will highlight the themes of love in the family as well as mercy and peace. ‘Let’s Talk Family and Let’s Be Family’ this Advent.”

Archbishop Eamon concluded, “As Advent is the season of preparation for the coming of our Lord, I encourage the faithful, notwithstanding our hectic schedule over the coming weeks, to make time to pray – alone, and with their family – and by so doing to draw nearer to Christ.”