

## 50<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress Launches Ecumenical Programme

**A unique element of the 50<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress, which will take place in Dublin from June 10<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> 2012, is the extensive involvement of Christians of other traditions in both the pastoral preparation and the official programme for the Congress week**

The organising committee of the 50<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress, chose the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> January) as the occasion for the launch of the ecumenical programme of the Congress. The theme of the Week of Prayer is *we will all be changed by the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Fr. Kevin Doran (Secretary General of IEC2012) commented that, “historically, there has been a tendency for Catholics to use the word ‘conversion’ as if it only applied to other people. St. Paul, who was a man of strong faith and firm conviction came to a new understanding of the meaning of faith, through his encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus. He subsequently devoted his whole life to bearing witness to Christ and forming Christian community in a pagan world”.

“One of the biggest challenges for Christians of all traditions in today’s society is to bear common witness to our faith in Jesus”, Fr. Doran said. “In order to do this we must all be changed through our encounter with Jesus, in whom alone we can triumph over sin, both our own sinful attitudes and the sinful structures which give rise to so much suffering in society.”

One of the more significant features of the 50<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress, is the dedication of one day, June 11<sup>th</sup> 2012, to celebrating and reflecting on the relationship of Communion into which Christians are drawn through Baptism.

International Eucharistic Congresses are celebrated every four years in the calendar of the Roman Catholic Church. While previous Congresses have sometimes included an ecumenical workshop or prayer, the extensive involvement of Christians of other traditions in so many elements of this Congress (preparation of pastoral resources; Congress week programme; youth programme) is quite unique. In advance of the Congress, Fr. Doran was invited to address the recent Synod of the Church of Ireland dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough.

Fr. Doran expressed his hope that “these concrete expressions of our communion can help to place more focus on the unity which we already have as Christians”.



### **Details of the Programme for Monday 11<sup>th</sup> June:**

The principal liturgy on this first full day of the Congress, will be a “Liturgy of Word and Water” celebrated by Most Rev. Michael Jackson (Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin). The homily will be preached by Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev of the Russian Orthodox Church. Meanwhile Brother Alois Löser, prior of Taizé will give the Catechesis (or teaching) on the theme of Baptism.

Other significant ecumenical interventions during the week include: Rev. Nicky Gumbel, of Alpha International, who will address the theme of reconciliation, and a presentation by Rev Ruth Patterson, Director of Restoration Ministries, on being ‘Companions on the Journey’ of faith. Prof. William Reville will give an address entitled ‘Celebrating the Mystery of Life’.

### **Notes for Editors:**

- The 50<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress 2012 will take place in Dublin from June 10<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> 2012 with the theme “*The Eucharist: Communion with Christ and with one another*”, and expects up to 20,000 pilgrims each day at the RDS, of whom about 50% will come from overseas.
- The Congress is an international gathering of people, every four years somewhere in the world, which aims to promote an awareness of the central place of the Eucharist in the life and mission of the Catholic Church; to help improve our understanding and celebration of the liturgy and to draw attention to the social dimension of the Eucharist. These aims are achieved through a programme of pastoral preparation in the years leading up to the Congress and a programme of liturgical and cultural events, lectures and workshops over the course of one week.
- The theme of the Congress is *The Eucharist: Communion with Christ and with one Another. (Communion – like Solidarity – means a relationship of mutual love and self-giving)*
- The concluding event of the Congress will be a Mass in Croke Park, in which approximately 80,000 people will participate.
- Previous Congresses took place in Quebec (2008) and Guadalajara (2004).
- Images in high resolution are available on request.
- For more information: [www.iec2012.ie](http://www.iec2012.ie)
- Registration for the Congress is now live on <http://www.iec2012.ie/registration>

Ends

### **Further information:**

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