



Alan McGuckian SJ  
Bishop of Down & Connor

---

Lisbreen, 73 Somerton Road, Belfast. BT15 4DE  
bishop@downandconnor.org  
+44 (0)28 9077 6185

### Pastoral Letter

#### Day of Prayer and Reflection for Gaza on Sunday, 24 August 2025

Dear brothers and sisters,

Ten weeks ago, the Catholic Bishops of Ireland dedicated the month of June as a special time of prayer for peace and for solidarity with the suffering people of Gaza.

Sadly, since June, the situation in Gaza has become steadily worse. The people there continue to be cruelly crushed by hunger, violence, death and destruction.

The Irish Bishops made it clear in June that genocidal actions sanctioned by the government in Israel are resulting in the death of tens of thousands of non-combatants, many of them women and children. "This is unconscionable and disproportionate. It is immoral for world leaders to stand by inactively in the face of this outrageous tragedy for humanity."

I know that people in parishes across the country are deeply troubled by stark and horrific images from Gaza of starving children and helpless, hungry families. The cruel actions of Hamas in continuing to keep hostages, and the bodies of hostages, away from their families is also to be unreservedly condemned.

All across Ireland dioceses are encouraging people to set aside Sunday, 24 August as a day of prayer and reflection for Gaza and for a renewed commitment by the international community for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

And so, I ask everyone: please join in 24 hours of prayer and reflection in your parishes and homes on Sunday, 24 August. Light a candle in your family home or local parish church; attend Mass, spend time before the Blessed Sacrament; pray the Rosary; make some small personal penance or sacrifice, and on that day let the light of hope radiate out from the island of Ireland for peace, for Gaza and for the future of its people.

Additionally, I encourage to reach out to your elected representatives, urging them to support humanitarian aid and peace efforts, and support Trócaire and other trusted agencies working on the ground.

With every blessing and good wish.  
I gCroí Íosa,

*+ Alan McGuckian SJ*