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| **Press Release - Saturday, 18 January 2025 - ImmediateAttention: Newsdesks, Photodesks and Religious Affairs Correspondents** |

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| **Bishop Deenihan: Catholic schools follow the example of Jesus, serving all regardless of faith, creed or social background**  |

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| A close-up of a fabric art  Description automatically generated |

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| **Caption**  'Saint Patrick on Croagh Patrick' artwork created by Explorer’s Class in Knockrooskey National School, Westport, Co Mayo, for the 2024 Catholic Primary Schools Management Association competition: Irelands Got Saints!  Please credit if publishing.  |

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| Across the island of Ireland, from tomorrow, Sunday 19 to Saturday 25 January, the annual celebration of Catholic Schools Week will be marked by parish communities.  During this dedicated week, school communities will pray, explore and discuss the 2025 theme Alive in Christ!Next week, on each day of Catholic Schools Week, there will be a specific thematic focus: Service in Our Community of Friends; Service in Our School Community; Service in Our Family Community; Service in Our Local Community; and, Service in Our Faith Community.” Bishop Tom Deenihan, Bishop of Meath and chair of the Council for Education of the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference, said, “Grounded in the dedication to service of their communities, Catholic schools continue to set a high standard in the provisions of education.  This is the result of the dedication of all in the school community: pupils, parents, staff, parishes, and those who volunteer to serve on Boards of Management.  Christ the Teacher provides the example and sign of what it is to be fully human, to be fully alive, and our schools endeavour to model the education that they provide on this example.“Generations of people have benefited from Catholic schools and our society is all the better for their contribution to the common good.  Our schools, following the example of Jesus, serve every person regardless of creed, background, faith, social status or age,” he said. During this special week, Catholic schools will explore the meaning of Pope Francis' introduction to Christus Vivit, “Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way he brings youth to our world, and everything he touches becomes young, new, full of life.”  This year’s theme complements Jubilee 2025, where Pope Francis calls on Catholics to be 'Pilgrims of Hope', contemplating what it means to be fully alive as a human being - living life to the full in Christ.Sensitive to the age-appropriateness of the various classes and years, the CSW theme will explore how we exist for one another in Christ, building from the wellbeing of the individual, extending the notion of true wellbeing to others, to our families and communities, and to the Other, in God.  The 2025 theme will mediate on hope, the true purpose and meaning of human life, and, in the more senior years, on true freedom.  The theme connects with Grandparents’ Day next Wednesday during Catholic Schools Week, and correspondingly with the subject of family in schools at post-primary level.Each day’s CSW resources offers scriptural reflection on prayer, action, student voice, and concern for our common home, and these are available here.**ENDS** |

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