

Bishop Fintan Monahan: Once a leader in road safety, Ireland has now one of the fastest growing road death rates in Europe .

- "This year, as the universal Catholic Church reflects on the theme of hope, we must remember that we have the power to make a difference through greater care and vigilance on our roads" - Bishop Monahan

Commenting on the death toll on Ireland's roads during 2024, Bishop Fintan Monahan, said, "243 deaths on the island's roads during 2024 is a national tragedy, and a failure in both public policy and in our own personal driving behaviour. The road safety record, both in the Republic and in the North, is of deep concern to me. A total of 174 people lost their lives on the roads in the Republic last year, while there were 69 fatalities recorded in Northern Ireland. Once a leader in road safety standards*, Ireland now has one of the fastest-growing road death rates in Europe. So many of these tragic fatalities are preventable, and an improvement requires constant care, attention, and vigilance from all road users: motorists, motorcyclists, cyclists, or pedestrians, as well as effective partnership with the relevant civic authorities."

In the spirit of this Jubilee Year of Hope, Bishop Monahan offered prayers for the protection of all road-users and called for a renewed vigilance and care at a 'Blessing of the Roads' ceremony on Sunday, 12th of January, following 11.30am Mass at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Ennis, Co Clare. This ceremony brought the local and road safety community together.

Bishop Monahan said, "It is crucial that families take responsibility for road deaths by discussing road safety at home. Every loss of life on our roads is a tragedy that impacts not just the individuals, families and local communities directly, but our entire society. The pain felt by loved ones of those lost on roads is particularly acute as this loss of human life is entirely preventable. There is an urgent need for a collective effort to reduce these preventable deaths."

During this 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope, Bishop Monahan invites families and parishes across the country to pray for those who have tragically lost their lives on the roads, and for the safety and well-being of all road users. He said, "This year, as the universal Catholic Church reflects on the theme of hope, we in Ireland must include "hope" - in our prayers and actions - to make a difference and protect human life on our roads. Let us unite in prayer for all who travel, and for an end to the heartbreak caused by preventable road fatalities."

Prayers for Road Safety.

17th Century Prayer (Irish).

In ainm an Athar le bua,

In ainm an Mhic a d'fhulaing an phian,

In ainm an Spiorad Naoimh le neart,

Muire is a Mac linn inár dtriall. Áiméan!

Contemporary Prayer (English).

Holy Mother, hear our prayer,

Keep us in your loving care,

Whatever the perils of the way,

Let us not add to them this day.

So to our caution and attention,

We add a prayer for your protection,

To beg God's blessing on this car,

To travel safely near and far.

Amen.

- Bishop Fintan Monahan is Bishop of Killaloe
- Sources for road safety information: An Garda Síochána and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.
- *Figures published by the European Commission in 2022.