

**13 May 2010**

**One minute's silence in schools across the country in tribute to those who suffered loss during the Great Famine**

On Friday 14th May 2010, as a gesture of respect for and acknowledgement of those who died or suffered loss in the Great Famine, there will be one minute's silent reflection in schools across the country. Pat Carey TD, Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Chair of the National Famine Commemoration Committee, warmly welcomes the decision of schools to support National Famine Memorial Day 2010.

Students in all primary and secondary schools will pause for one minute at noon on Friday May 14th to reflect on the loss of the Great Famine and contemplate famine and hunger worldwide. Trócaire and Gorta have also issued information to schools who wish to explore the links between the Great Irish Famine and famine in the modern world.

Minister Carey said: "I am delighted that schools are supporting this year's National Famine Memorial Day 2010 and I would like to thank all of them for this support. The Famine had a huge impact on Irish society and was one of the greatest tragedies in our country's history. Although famine in our own country may seem unlikely today, for others around the world it is a reality. We must, as a nation, use our experience and empathy to raise awareness of their plight".

Minister Carey also thanked the Irish Catholic Bishops who are encouraging parish communities to find an appropriate way of marking the National Famine Commemoration Day locally.

"I would like to express my gratitude to the Irish Bishops who have asked parishioners all over the country to mark the National Famine Commemoration Day on Sunday 16th 2010. Their contribution is valued and they have helped us to reach out to a huge amount of people across Ireland who can now remember the victims of the Famine in their prayers".

The 2010 National Famine Commemoration is being held on Sunday, 16th May in Murrisk, Co. Mayo with an international event taking place in New York the following week. A number of related initiatives are also taking place to support the official National Famine Commemoration programme, with a particular focus on the theme of linking famine and hunger, in the past and in the modern world.

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