



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. HIGGINS

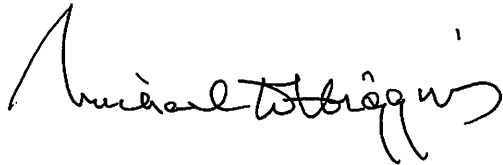
I would like to send my best wishes to all those participating in this year's celebrations of the 700th anniversary of St Nicholas' Collegiate Church in Galway.

The history of St Nicholas' is a rich and distinguished one. The church has provided an enduring space of peace, comfort and worship for generations of Galway residents, and welcomed through its doors visitors from nations across the globe.

Today it is not only an integral part of Galway's story but also a profound connection to the very different city in which St Nicholas' was conceived and constructed. Throughout its 700 years St Nicholas' has witnessed the many changes and seismic events which have crafted the Galway we know today, while remaining true to the great spirit of compassion and care which defined the life of St Nicholas of Myra to whom the church is dedicated.

Today St Nicholas Collegiate Church continues to be a place of inclusion, solace and reassurance - welcoming all those who come to worship, and reaching out a generous hand of friendship to those who are vulnerable or in need. It is written into the fabric of Galway life, its shade falling on the centuries old Galway Street Market, its annual Carol Service a fundamental part of Christmas for the many who queue to gain entry.

I thank all those who, through their involvement with St Nicholas', work with dedication to create a fairer and better society. I wish you an enjoyable celebration of this remarkable and milestone anniversary, and every success as you continue to enrich the spiritual, cultural and community life of Galway City.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael D. Higgins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping tail.

Michael D. Higgins
Uachtarán na hÉireann
President of Ireland