

## PRAYER TO ST. LAURENCE O'TOOLE

St. Laurence O'Toole, man of peace,  
you were in the middle of family and political  
conflict from your earliest days. Give the gift  
of peace and hope to all who experience the  
trauma of division in families, in communities  
and among nations.

St. Laurence O'Toole, man of prayer,  
you recognised the call to serve the Lord  
in a particular way at Glendalough. Give the  
gift of perseverance to all who are discerning  
their Christian vocation at this time.

St. Laurence O'Toole, man of faith,  
you had the openness to accept a position of  
leadership in your community at an early age.  
Bless our young people with a spirit of  
generosity to offer themselves in the service  
of the Gospel.

St. Laurence O'Toole, man of prayer,  
you inspired people by your commitment to  
the spiritual life and the recitation of the  
Prayer of the Church. Fill us with that desire  
to pray in communion with each other  
throughout each day.

St. Laurence O'Toole, man of faith,  
you opened your heart and your doors to  
those who were poor. Increase our awareness  
of those in need and inspire us to act with  
justice and charity at all times.

St. Laurence O'Toole, man of prayer,  
you were respected for your commitment to  
your Church and to your country. Grant us  
the grace to live in this world while always  
reflecting the eternal values of the kingdom.

St. Laurence O'Toole, man of peace,  
you gave your last ounce of energy in the  
cause of peace. Give us the gift of tirelessness  
as we try to live as instruments of Christ's  
peace, love and tolerance.

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*The Icon of St Laurence was commissioned  
in 2012 for the Year of Faith and written  
by Mihai Cucu. © Archdiocese of Dublin*

## THE ICON OF ST. LAURENCE O'TOOLE PATRON SAINT OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF DUBLIN



Saint Laurence O'Toole (in Irish: 'Naomh Lorcán Ua Tuathail') is the principal patron saint of the Archdiocese of Dublin. This icon of St Laurence was written during the Year of Faith (2012-2013). It presents us with elements of St Laurence's life that speak to us of how the mystery of Christ was at work in him, leading him to be a person of faith, of prayer and of peace. The aim of an icon is to help us to enter into relationship with God and to help this friendship grow. Even looking at it in silence can be the beginnings of prayer. St Laurence looks at us square-on, as a person of faith facing the world with courage in the strength given by God. The prayer of Psalm 17 is apt for him: "I love you Lord, my strength, my rock, my fortress my saviour. My God is the rock where I take refuge; my shield, my mighty help, my stronghold." Laurence was born in Castledermot, County Kildare, in 1128. His father was Maurice O'Toole, King of High Murray.





When he was just 10 years old, Laurence was given as a hostage to Dermot McMurrough, King of Leinster. The child we see in chains recalls how he spent two precarious years in very harsh conditions as a child hostage. We see the saintly bishop's hand outstretched in protection of the "widow and orphan" (cf. Psalm 146: 7-9). In biblical terms, widows and orphans represent the poor and marginalized of any kind. Beside St Laurence's foot is a basket of bread, symbolic of his feeding of and charity towards the poor.

The round tower and church building recall the monastery of Glendalough, where the young Laurence was released from being hostage aged 12 and where he chose to remain. He was elected abbot of the monastery at 26.

The surrounding hills remind us that much of the Archdiocese of Dublin is in a rural setting.

St Laurence stands firmly on a rock - symbolic of his trust in God - and of the small hermit's cave called St Kevin's Bed in Glendalough, a place of retreat, silence and solitude to which he often returned.

St Laurence wears a Bishop's mitre and the 'pallium' of an Archbishop. The pallium is made of lambs' wool and features several crosses, to make us think of Christ the Good Shepherd, who bears his sheep on his shoulders. He became Archbishop of Dublin in 1162.



St Laurence also wears a mitre and holds a crozier, signs of his office as shepherd to the people of the Diocese entrusted to him. He wears the white alb, stole and chasuble of a priest. His face, as it engages us, does not show any particular emotion. We find this sort of expression on the face of anyone who is listening carefully to us, simply there for us, fully present to the other person.



On the right we see stone buildings representing the city of Dublin. St Laurence began the rebuilding of Christchurch Cathedral (*centre*). We see an open door. His door was open in invitation to the prayer of the church, in welcome to the poor and to the renewal and support of clergy.



Above right is the spire of the chapel of the town of Eu in Normandy, France, where St Laurence died whilst on a mission to further reconciliation and peace between King Henry II of England and the Irish Kings. The people there recognised him as a deeply holy man. His tomb in Eu soon became a place of pilgrimage and he was canonised in 1225.



On the right, we see a boat with the logo of the Year of Faith on it's sails. The boat symbolizes the Church, the barque of Peter. The main 'mast' of the boat in the logo is the cross with sail shapes which compose an IHS – the first three letters of the name of Jesus in Greek. It is Christ who gives us dynamism and urges us on. The background to the sails is a circle, like the sun which, together with the 'IHS', reminds us also of the Eucharist. The boat is representative of St Laurence's many travels.

In the last ten years of his life Laurence made many trips to England and led the six Irish bishops who attended the Lateran Council in Rome in 1179. The boat sails turbulent waters and we see a shield attacked by many spears: St Laurence lived through violent times during which he was much sought after as a deeply respected mediator. Man of faith in God, his rock; man of deep prayer and blessed peacemaker, St Laurence O'Toole, pray for us.