

# Peace Light from Bethlehem



On the 5<sup>th</sup> of December a candle was lit in the Grotto of Christ's Birth in the Church of the Nativity, in Bethlehem. This flame was taken by young Israeli and Palestinian Scouts to Tel Aviv Airport where with the support of Austrian Airlines a Scout carried it to Austria.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> December a *Service for the Gift of Peace* will be held in Vienna, where Scouts and Guides from all over Europe will gather to take the flame and transport across Europe by rail, by road and on foot through Austria, Switzerland and France – then on to Calais, Dover and up through England to Liverpool. On Wednesday the 16<sup>th</sup> December members of the Forum for Catholics in Scouting Ireland will collect the Light in Liverpool and bring it via Holyhead by Stena Line to Dublin.

On Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December members of Scouting and Guiding will hold a Peace Light Service in the Church of the Visitation in Fairview. From there the Scouts will take the Light to places in their own Parishes: Churches and places of worship, Hospitals and Homes for retired citizens.

On Friday 18<sup>th</sup> the 'Light' will be carried by Irish Rail to such centres as; Arklow, Belfast, Cork, Carlow, Derry, Ennis, Galway, Portlaoise, Limerick and Waterford, It will also travel by road to areas not serviced by train such as; the north midland and the Ulster north-west.

This year the Light will shine in places where the significance of what it symbolises is appreciated – it will not only burn in Ireland but all countries of the European Union, Central and Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation and in the countries of North and South America.

In past years the light has been presented to Pope Benedict XVI, former President Michail Gorbatschow of Russia, former King Hussein of Jordan, EU President Romano Prodi and other member of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, the UN Troops in Kosovo and to Ground Zero, New York.

This chain of lights is a symbol peace, warmth, love and family. By passing on this Peace Light from Bethlehem we want to help to overcome the darkness caused by hate, egoism, materialism and spread happiness and hope into the hearts of all those who come in contact with it.