

December 2003

CHRISTMAS DAY SERMON 2003

**Sermon Preached by the Right Reverend Paul Colton,
Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross
on Christmas Day 2003
at St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork**

Our telling of the Christmas story is diminished because we focus almost entirely on those characters in the unfolding drama who seem to respond with devotion and obedience: an obedient Mary, an acquiescent Joseph, unruly, but nonetheless responsive herdsmen, perceptive philosophers who enter on bended knee.

The two Gospel writers who tell the story of the birth appear at first glance to collude with us in this. No doubt this suits their neat theological purposes.

But what of the others in the story? The Inn, for example, was full. Perhaps other travellers trying to have an early night so that they will be well rested for an early start to get first place in that long and tedious queue the next morning at the census? Or locals meeting with friends or relatives who've arrived in town, catching up on family news? Groups of men talking politics earnestly over a few drinks? Maybe even a few serious troublemakers in a quiet corner plotting mischief against the Roman occupiers? And, out on the town, reluctant soldiers, on duty in a foreign land, thinking of home.

A more careful reading of the Gospels releases us to detect a certain reluctance among those who do feature in the story.

What about the shepherds?

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.... When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." (Luke 2.8 and 15)
Did they all get up and go, of one mind, happy to abandon their life's work and security - the sheep? Surely not! They were hardy men and boys, no doubt worldly wise, and so among those who rushed to Bethlehem on foot of the Angel's message, there must have been some who held back, even a little.

The 17th Century poet Henry Vaughan in *The Shepherds* mentions this initial reticence:

How happen'd it that in the dead of night
You only saw true light,
While Palestine was fast asleep, and lay
Without one thought of Day?

...

Perhaps some harmless care for the next day
Did in their bosoms play,
As where to lead their sheep, what silent nook,
What springs, or shades to look:
But that was all; and now with gladsome care
They for the town prepared;
They leave their flock, and in a busy talk
All towards Bethlem walk
To see their souls' Great Shepherd, Who has come
To bring all stragglers home;

And over the centuries artists would also have us believe that some of those shepherds were stragglers. In paintings all of the same title, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, the 17th Century artists Fabritius, Rambrandt and Reni depicted some of the shepherds hesitating in the background, outside all together, or in the doorway at the half light, afraid to approach the full light surrounding the baby in the manger. One of the artists even shows some not-so-eager herdsmen still out on the hillside, not having bothered to pay attention to the message at all: no journey made to Bethlehem.

There is something of the straggler in all of us: the incarnation is after all a mystery, and faith is spring-boarded from a significant leap of heart and human spirit. Some do not like what they see in the institutional manifestation of the faith and others have felt profoundly hurt by the Church.

For our part we as the people of God, the Church, have made much, especially in recent decades of our solidarity with those we say are "on the edge", the marginalised – more stragglers.

To see their souls' Great Shepherd, Who has come

To bring all stragglers home;

As churches, especially in recent decades, we have made much of our claim to be on the side of those who are oppressed by society and consigned to its margins.

The present controversy within Anglicanism about homosexuality is now calling the Church's bluff about this professed preference to be, like Christ, among those on that edge. We have claimed to be on the side of those who were oppressed by society and consigned to its margins. But how are we faring? This edge place is where most homosexuals were forced to live prior to decriminalisation and where, in spite of immense changes in society, many still find themselves - especially those within the Church.

The Church has been complicit in the resulting injustice and immense human suffering.

Part of our responsibility centres on our acquiescence in the misuse of Scripture, caused by our inertia on the one hand and by our fear on the other of giving intelligent people of faith the tools for handling God's word rationally.

The sincerity of our profession to favour those on the edge, and our inclusive charter is being put to the test now, and so far we are not faring very well: much of the debate has centred on protecting the structures of the institution rather than on people, understanding their situations and showing them Christ-like compassion.

Within the New Testament itself, for those early followers of Jesus Christ who were all Jews, the first cathartic decision came in relation to gentiles, the uncircumcised. Since then the Christian story has been one of prejudice being overcome step by step: slaves, Jews, science, single mothers, children born outside marriage, people in interchurch marriages, victims of suicide, divorcees, women, first in decision-making in the Church and then in the ordained ministry. Think in your own lifetime of how, arising from our sense of the love of Christ, our attitudes have changed in the Church to many of these people.

Christian history is full of people who, from being on the outside at one time, have, through a change of heart of the Church, found themselves on the inside of the story. At the time, such changes were what the Roman Catholic theologian James Allison calls "ruptures of the impossible". Every so often, he says, we have to make "...an incursion into impossibility....[so that]....what looked like an impossibility is a fading taboo, and that all the violence which goes along with its maintenance is also fading." Today - nothing new it seems - we are challenged by

another group in the Church to make a similar incursion into what we once deemed impossible.

For centuries the Church of Ireland, the Church of England and many of our others sister Churches in Anglicanism have fully and happily utilised the talents of gay people – lay and ordained – while, at the same time, articulating an official public line.

Of gay people in this congregation, in congregations all over the Church and throughout our communities, I believe the time has come – too little, too late I know for many – humbly and contritely to ask forgiveness.

The debate about sexuality is our current issue. In the midst of our preoccupation with it, we ought not to lose sight of the straggler in all of us. Whether Christmas is the one time we come in from the hillside or whether we bend our knee day by day at the feet of the incarnate God, there is our profoundly demanding, distracting and sapping humanity. On this journey through life, the pilgrimage of faith is not easy for most people.

The good news is that again and again, God comes to those in the darkness of night, or in the half light or indeed to those still on the hillside – in those places of our doubts, our sense of not belonging. The light of the Christ-child beckons to us to come in. God comes to us and meets us. He has come "...to bring all stragglers home;"

GAY DEBATE – CHURCH'S BLUFF BEING CALLED

**CHURCH HAS BEEN COMPLICIT IN THE OPPRESSION OF HOMOSEXUALS – MISUSE OF
SCRIPTURE-**

– TIME TO ASK FOR FORGIVENESS OF GAY PEOPLE

Preaching on Christmas Day in St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork, the Right Reverend Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork said that in the current worldwide controversy within Anglicanism about homosexuality the Church's bluff is being called, and it is not faring well.

"As churches, especially in recent decades, we have made much of our claim to be on the side of those who are oppressed by society and consigned to its margins. The present controversy within Anglicanism about homosexuality is now calling the Church's bluff about this professed preference to be, like Christ, among those on that edge. **But how are we faring?**

This edge place is where most homosexuals were forced to live prior to decriminalisation and where, in spite of immense changes in society, many still find themselves - especially those within the Church. **The Church has been complicit in the resulting injustice and immense human suffering.**

Part of our responsibility centres on our acquiescence in **the misuse of Scripture**, caused by our inertia on the one hand and by our fear on the other of giving intelligent people of faith the tools for handling God's word rationally.

The sincerity of our profession to favour those on the edge, and our inclusive charter is **being put to the test now**, and so far we are not faring very well: much of the debate has centred on protecting the structures of the institution rather than on people, understanding their situations and showing them Christ-like compassion.

Referring to the disjunction between the official line and practice, he said:

"For centuries the Church of Ireland, the Church of England and many of our other sister Churches in Anglicanism have fully and happily utilised the talents of gay people – lay and ordained – while, at the same time, articulating an official public line.

Of gay people in this congregation, in congregations all over the Church and throughout our communities, **I believe the time has come – too little, too late I know for many – humbly and contritely to ask forgiveness."**

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2003

Issued jointly by The Most Reverend John Buckley, Bishop of Cork and Ross & The Right Reverend Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross

In the midst of the flurry of Christmas preparations, and thinking of the emotional burdens that the season puts on so many people, let us remember that the central message of Christmas is a spiritual one: Christ came that we may have life and have it to the full. As we focus on the baby in the manger, we can be assured that Christ's presence with us gives us hope especially where there is worry or despair.

People continue to search for deep and lasting meaning in life, especially when faced with profound questions arising from tragedies and disappointments, whether global or personal. This hunger can only be satisfied when we recognise and nourish our spiritual lives. Christ is indeed the "bread of life"—the bread for all our longings.

At Christmas time we give thanks to God for sending his Son as saviour; we celebrate our shared Christian values and traditions; we renew our hope for a New Year.

We extend our warmest wishes to the people of the dioceses and wish all a Blessed Christmas.

Most Reverend John Buckley, Bishop of Cork and Ross.

Right Reverend Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross.

November 2003

Three Dioceses meet in Cork to discuss The Hard Gospel

Three bishops and three diocesan synods, Cashel, Limerick and Cork, gathered in The Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork, on Saturday November 29 for the eagerly-awaited and historical Regional Meeting to listen to Dr Gareth Higgins' presentation on The Hard Gospel -- that you love God and love your neighbour as yourself -- followed by detailed discussion of the 179 pages of the Report.

The meeting began with statements from each of the three bishops. Bishop Barrett focused on ethnic difference and asylum seekers and called for a

compassionate approach by government and people to asylum in this country, saying,

"It is all too easy for us in the Republic of Ireland to distance ourselves from the implications and insights of this study, seeing sectarianism as a virus which belongs elsewhere. Sectarianism is everywhere, often lying dormant deep within each of us, until a particular button of the subconscious is pressed."

He stressed the need for a Christian attitude to our brothers and sisters from other countries and asked that people go one step further to urge the Government to deal compassionately with asylum seekers. The Government, he said, urges the repatriation of our own people, yet at the same time expels children of Irish citizenship. "No Irish child should be a second class citizen, irrespective of class, creed or colour." Tendencies to racism or sectarianism need to be confronted as "often and everywhere goes the Christ in stranger's guise."

Bishop Mayes pointed out that sectarianism is only one aspect of the phenomenon of dealing with difference. He told how, in going to Japan (1968-1974), he had moved from one culture where he had 'place' and was known, to another where he had no place and was unknown. He experienced what it felt like to be "one of them" and how vulnerable and dangerous it is to be such. The first Japanese phrase he picked up meant 'filthy foreigner'.

We need to learn to celebrate heritage, culture, tradition and ethos, he said, but warned that people reach danger point if they begin to think that unique means superior, or if sectarianism becomes sanctified by religion:

"The manifold barriers that exist and have always existed between human beings are based on race, gender, culture, class and a number of others besides. Sectarianism is part of that phenomenon, but in some ways is more insidious and perhaps more intractable because it adds divine sanction to the religious boundaries that separate us."

Bishop Colton focused on the challenge behind dealing positively with difference, saying,

"One of the greatest challenges facing us all, not only in the Churches today but also in society at large, is to learn to live peaceably and creatively together in the context of our diversity, where difference is accommodated. This is particularly the case at this time within the Anglican Communion as debate about sexual orientation proceeds. The days to come will test our maturity as a community of

faith and, moreover, by our words and actions, the very breadth of the embrace of Christ's love and the inclusiveness of the Christian good news itself will be measured by many within and outside the Church alike."

He felt that many ideas, attitudes and prejudices take root in the early days of nurture in home, school, church community and society and the challenge is to learn to join hands to live with the difference; the challenge of reconciliation.

Dr Gareth Higgins, in presenting the Report, hoped it would help people to take "a long, hard, careful look at themselves" and at the variety of issues that are enclosed in the term 'sectarianism'. He also hopes that debate and engagement on the issues will be ongoing in both dioceses and parishes and made the suggestion that a Lenten study document on dealing with difference might be considered.

In the Plenary Session that followed, twenty- four people spoke to the Report, producing some worthy suggestions and statements:

- that goals be set, met and evaluated.
- Sever ties with loyal organisations.
- It is not sectarianism but bigotry that is the problem, so we must begin a bigotry eradication process (BEP).
- The Church of Ireland is very good at saying the right thing inaudibly.
- Where are we going to get the Christian foot soldiers, armed with the Gospel of Love, to be out there; who are they and where are they coming from?
- Educate our people in Theology, aiming at spiritual growth in the pew, and so equip them to become more involved, enlightened and more Christian.
- We must face up to inter-faith marriage.
- We must take the views of young adults seriously and provide a forum within a Church that they can respect as engaging with societal issues.
- Bishops to use the media to heighten social problems.
- Models of ministry in the community are much more empowering than the Church.
- Unlatch the door of your heart and believe that others belong to you.

Having concluded the business of the day, it fell to Bishop Colton to close the meeting. He thanked all for their attendance, contribution and commitment.

Regional Meeting to Discuss Sectarianism in the Church of Ireland

Bishop of Cork: "Current debate about sexuality will be the measure of our maturity... The very breadth and inclusiveness of Christ's love and the Gospel will be measured

Cork will be the venue on Saturday 29th November for an historic regional meeting of representative members and decision-makers of the Church of Ireland from three Dioceses – Cashel, Limerick and Cork – to discuss a nationally produced report concerning sectarianism within the Church of Ireland.

Set up amidst the fallout of the Drumcree controversy the Church of Ireland's Committee on Sectarianism commissioned a scoping study, and the report is being studied in each Diocese.

The three Bishops – Bishop Peter Barrett of Cashel, Bishop Michael Mayes of Limerick and Bishop Paul Colton of Cork – decided to host a regional meeting to discuss the report. It is a measure of the significance and importance attached to the Church of Ireland's response to this issue that this first ever meeting of its kind in this region is being held.

Welcoming the Bishops and representatives of the other Dioceses to Cork, Bishop Colton said:

"One of the greatest challenges facing us all, not only in the Churches today, but also in society at large is to learn to live peaceably and creatively together in the context of our diversity, where difference is accommodated. This is particularly the case at this time within the Anglican Communion as the debate about sexual orientation proceeds. The days to come will test our maturity as a community of faith, and moreover, by our words and actions, the very breadth of the embrace

of Christ's love and the inclusiveness of the Christian good news will be measured, by many within and outside the Church alike."

Dr Gareth Higgins, author of the report will address the meeting, and members present will have every opportunity to raise the issues which encompass Church of Ireland identity, Church government and leadership, the differences within the church North and South, political and theological differences, ecumenical relationships, inter-faith dialogue, gender and age differences as well as the currently topical matter within the Anglican Communion of sexual orientation. The meeting will start at 11 a.m. on Saturday 29th November and is being held in the Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork.

Celebration; St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Sunday November 9 2003

Many people from all over the Diocese attended Evensong in St Fin Barre's Cathedral on Sunday November 9 to witness and support **Avril Gubbins of Mallow Union** who was being commissioned by the Bishop as a Diocesan Lay Reader and also to celebrate the forty- year contribution to the lay ministry of **George Stoney of Carrigaline Union**. The rows of Lay Readers present were also testament to a thriving and valued lay ministry in this Diocese.

The wonderful organ music, the singing of both choir and congregation added greatly to this celebratory mood.

The Revd Robert Kingston of Mallow Union presented Avril to the Bishop and it was fitting that Diocesan Reader **Keith Roberts** had the honour of giving the sermon in which through anecdote and reference he gave an enlightening picture of lay ministry. His words on both Avril and George are worth knowing and quoting.

" Tonight the Lay Readers in the diocese are very privileged because we have a double celebration. First of all we have the Commissioning and Initiation of Avril Gubbins into the Guild and secondly we are celebrating George Stoney's fortieth anniversary as a Lay Reader, although the actual date was a few months ago. This is, without doubt, a tremendous achievement of both service and dedication.

I will begin with Avril. Avril has come to us with an abundance of talent and a wealth of life experience. In fact, in her own life she has suffered more than a fair share of tragedy, but instead of being bitter and resentful she has become a better and stronger person. She has achieved this through her tremendous faith and trust in Christ. Indeed, she has gone further, as through such organisations as an Inter Church Prayer group she has helped many others who have also suffered the trauma of hardship along the journey of life.

Tonight, Avril, you are probably wondering how will I cope and what will people think of me, especially those in my own parish. Have no fear, Avril, if the people in your parish give you only half the support I got from mine you will be fine. Your family and close friends will of course also support you and your family in particular will help you to keep your feet firmly on the floor. Mine certainly do. However, your greatest support will come from Jesus himself. Just as he promised his disciples and us *I will be with you always, even unto the end of the age*. And, as you and I know, he is the only one who never breaks his promises."

Speaking in praise of George was quite a challenge for Keith because of the initial instruction "not to mention his name more than twice." This could prove difficult!

"George was commissioned a Lay Reader on July 28 1963. Bishop Perdue commissioned him with four others. Unfortunately the other four are no longer with us. They were Jack Withrington, Cecil Marchant, Herbert Halliday and, last but by no means least, Joe Matthews.

We should remember that at the time those five were commissioned there were very few lay readers in the Church of Ireland. The only two in the Diocese prior to that group were Cecil Garde and Bill Hick. These men faced a very difficult situation because some people who disliked the idea of a layperson leading worship would actually walk out of a service if a lay reader were doing duty. This was something that, thankfully, people like myself did not have to face.

George has informed me that in 1965 there were 111 churches, three chapels, 36 rectors and seven curates in these United Dioceses. Today there are 71 churches, three chapels, 22 rectors, three curates and five with general licence. The number of churches has fallen by 40 but, I hasten to add, George was not responsible! For the record, George has led worship in 100 different churches on 546 occasions and on 352 Sundays.

He is still also very heavily involved in his own parish in Carrigaline. He has been treasurer for as long as I can remember and Carrigaline Parish would not be in the healthy position it is in without his financial expertise. Indeed his financial astuteness and capability have been used on numerous occasions by both the wider Church and the business world.

So to you, George, I say that well-known and appropriate phrase *well done, thou good and faithful servant* but to which I add the two further words; 'so far'."

The faithful few who regularly attend Evensong in St Fin Barre's were very happy to share their worship on such a joyful evening. Refreshments were served in St Fin Barre's Parish hall following the service.

October 2003

Monday, 13th October, 2003

"I'm not the Fugitive" says Bishop of Cork

The Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, the Right Reverend Paul Colton, has been greatly amused since an encounter on Patrick Street, Cork last week when he was asked whether he is the "96 FM Fugitive."

Bishop Colton was walking to a meeting (dressed in his clerical colour and Bishop's cross – looking very much the Bishop) when a young woman ran to catch up with him and said "Excuse me, are you the 96FM Fugitive?"

"I've been dining out on this" said the Bishop. "I found it hilarious, and of course, it shows the interest there is in local radio and in the competition."

"On a more serious note" said Bishop Colton "it goes to show us in the churches that what we represent is no longer instantly recognisable in the new Ireland. That's not such a bad thing. It's a challenge to us!" "

But I'm not the fugitive!" he added.

The 96 FM fugitive competition is being run by Cork 96 FM radio station. Clues are broadcast each day and the person who successful tracks down the fugitive may win significant prize money.

Templebreedy School celebrates Animal Week

At least thirty dogs, one gerbil, one goldfish, one budgie, one Guide Dog puppy and more joined the pupils, teachers and parents of Templebreedy National School, Crosshaven, on Friday October 3 '03 for a thronged open- air service of thanks and blessing for pets to celebrate Animal Week. It had been a year since these pets last met en masse so there was great excitement, tail-wagging, lead-pulling and a few friendly growls as everyone collected in the schoolyard and observed each other.

In his introduction, the Revd Daniel Nuzum welcomed all to Templebreedy, especially the pets that bring such joy and fun to families. All present sang the hymn *All things Bright and Beautiful*, with some of the dogs out-singing the humans by far, although Susie the budgie was best at the high notes. Then, following the service, owners could bring their pets to the Rector for an individual blessing and some animal-chat.

The pupils were wonderful and listened intently as local dog trainer, Philippa Mockler, gave them tips on training and demonstrated these with her own dog, a sleek Red Setter called Hayley. The work of the Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind became a very real experience for all present when they met Chelsea, a Guide dog puppy being house trained by Alison Flack of Currabinny. Chelsea captivated her young audience and 'being in church' became another learning experience for her. Many questions were asked about Chelsea's future training and life.

Congratulations were expressed to teachers Dorothy Verplanke, Doris Bryan and Karen Jennings for their work with the children and the emphasis they place on nature and the environment in their school programme.

When it was all over Lucy, Missy, Trixie, Rosie, Joey, Nessie, Pablo and all the other dogs and pets smiled at their owners and went home! Animal Week was over.

September 2003

Diocesan Day of Reflection on Ministry

Saturday September 27 2003

On the invitation of the Bishop a large number of diocesan members, ordained and lay, met in the Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery, Co. Cork on Saturday September 27 '03 for a **Diocesan Day of Reflection on Ministry**.

The Revd Chris Webb, national Renewal Officer for the Church in Wales, was guest speaker and facilitator for the day and using Power Point he gave a general picture of the Church of Wales to bring delegates' on a journey' so that through shared concerns and challenges they would learn from the Welsh experience.

"Mission," he said " is an _expression of God's self-sending nature. We are caught up in the character of God when we do mission and we need to know how to be relevant, to communicate to people and to talk to them."

There were approximately ten tables in the conference room, nine people at each, including a group leader. Three major questions were to be addressed and when these were posed each person wrote down a few points in silence. Then the buzz of talking started and the team leader noted the important points being made by the group. After a set time the leaders then spoke on their group's most important concerns.

The questions were:

What kind of Ireland? What changes would you like to see by 2013?

What kind of Church? What patterns of church life would we need to develop to contribute to our vision of community and nation?

What kind of Ministry? What patterns of ministry would best serve the churches, local communities and nation?

Table discussions grew louder, mixed with laughter and intensity and then, as the main points were enunciated, an over all diocesan and national picture began to emerge. There was even a reluctance to break for lunch!

To allow a short rest from the work-process, Chris also spoke on the marks of a Church in mission: vision, spirituality, evangelism, belonging, empowerment and fluidity and, again, a wider picture emerged.

In bringing the day to a close the Bishop praised all present and said the day of reflection was very significant, as people at different stages had come together, shared and sorted together to find a starting point. He stressed that although the picture was clearer a great deal of talking still needed to be done. This day is only a beginning, he said, but "we have begun."

**Bishop Asks Church to Consider its Future
"Church of Ireland in County Cork has to envision a new way
forward"**

Friday, 26th September, 2003

The Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, the Right Reverend Paul Colton, has called a meeting of leaders (ordained and lay) and parishioners in his Diocese to reflect together on the future of the Diocese. A day seminar is being held on Saturday 27th September in the Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery. Co Cork starting at 10.30 a.m.

The Rev. Chris Webb, an Anglican priest and Franciscan Tertiary from Cardiff, who works as national Renewal Officer for the Church in Wales will be the speaker. Using work he has already done in that sister Church of the Church of Ireland he will facilitate reflection and help Cork Diocese to continue thinking strategically about its priorities and Ministry needs.

Bishop Colton is optimistic, but realistic in his assessment of the current situation:

“Things cannot go on the way they are,” he said. “The simple reality is that what we have at the moment and what we are trying to sustain is not sustainable in the way in which we are currently addressing it: too much infrastructure to the detriment of our core activity: Christian ministry”

In spite of National Census figures which show significant growth in the Church of Ireland population, the Bishop points to immense challenges of our time:

There have been rapid recent changes in deployment at every level of ministry in the Church’s life, which has resulted in instability.

Rising costs, including notably insurance premiums and building repairs, mean that small communities cannot afford all of the seventy two church buildings - not to mention halls, houses and schools - they currently have in our region.

One of the unforeseen consequences by the State of planning and heritage legislation, and the subsequent listing of many of our churches as heritage, puts an impossible burden on small minority communities: some may disappear.

There are forty seven vacant parishes in the Church of Ireland; three in the Bishop’s Diocese.

In spite of these things Bishop Colton believes the Church, its ministers, lay and ordained, and parishioners at every level of Church life are working faithfully and hard to sustain its core activities of ministry and partnership with society.

“In this day of reflection we hope to harness and channel that goodwill, faithfulness and commitment,” he said.

HUMAN SEXUALITY

A Pastoral Letter from the Bishops of the Church of Ireland

Society is experiencing the breakdown of national, community and inter-personal relationships on a scale that none of us has experienced before. The problem is made more difficult because there is no universally agreed standard, religious or secular, social or ethical, by which to order our affairs.

One aspect of life in which this brokenness is most personally and painfully experienced is in the realm of human sexuality. While this has become the area of immediate concern, it is equally a matter of concern that the sexualisation of

almost every area of life in today's world has seriously damaged the potential for deep and lasting enrichment that comes from close personal friendships between and within the sexes that do not have any sexual expression. Life today has become greatly impoverished as a result.

In the case of homosexuality, social attitudes range from complete acceptance through indifference to complete rejection. Within the Christian tradition, notwithstanding the pastoral care and compassion shown by many, the attitude has more often than not been one of non-acceptance and at times harsh condemnation. At its worst this has led to the demonising, demeaning and oppression of those who, by inclination or in practice, have found themselves attracted to others of the same sex.

This has meant, among other things, that a wholesome engagement with, and open discussion of, the issues surrounding homosexuality has for too long been side-stepped by the Churches. It is a basic assertion of the Christian faith that God has created all that is, and that in Jesus Christ he has entered fully into, and redeemed, a broken world. Despite that affirmation, it has often been people of no particular religious affiliation, or religious people unsupported or opposed by their own institutions, who have been to the fore in engaging with the issues in a way they, should have been dealt with by the Churches.

The current debate within Anglicanism has shown that harsh condemnatory attitudes on both sides in the current debate have not gone away. There is still no unanimity on the question itself across the Churches. In trying to discern the mind of Christ, the bishops believe that the Church of Ireland as a whole ought to address the question prayerfully, humbly, carefully and generously.

The bishops have been engaging in this pastoral issue, both individually and corporately, in a process of consultation and research that began before the Lambeth Conference of 1998, and has been continuing ever since. The fact that little has been said collectively is an indication of the pastoral sensitivities felt by the Bishops, together with the complexity of the issue, and of a considerable range of viewpoints among the bishops themselves.

It is evident that no clear-cut solution will be found independently of Biblical reflection, mature thinking, and patient listening on the part of the Church as a whole. This process must involve prayerful and respectful consideration of views

and insights within the Church and beyond it. The traditional Anglican concept of the *consensus fidelium* would seem to demand this.

Together the bishops:

1. Affirm the centrality and authority of the Scriptures for all Christian discourse.
2. Recognise that the interpretation of Scripture is itself an area of divergence among Christians.
3. Hold that the study of Scripture must also engage with the God-given gifts of the cumulative insights of the Christian tradition, and of human reason.
4. Remind the Church that since all people have been created in the image and likeness of God, no one should be understood solely, or even primarily, in terms of his or her sexuality.
5. Encourage an attitude of respect for one another.

In general, four main viewpoints may be identified within the Church of Ireland with regard to same-sex relationships. They are not so much clear-cut, isolated points of view as relative positions on a spectrum, and the views of the members of the present House of Bishops are to be found across this spectrum.

1. The witness of the Scriptures is consonant with a view that rejects homosexual practice of any kind, and that marriage between a man and a woman in life-long union remains the only appropriate place for sexual relations. This must remain the standard for Christian behaviour.

2. The witness of the Scriptures is consonant with a more sympathetic attitude to homosexuality than has been traditional, but this would not at present permit any radical change in the Church's existing stance on the question.

3. The witness of the Scriptures is consonant with the view that a permanent and committed same-gender relationship which, through its internal mutuality and support brings generosity, creativity and love into the lives of those around, cannot be dismissed by the Church as intrinsically disordered.

4. The witness of the Scriptures is consonant with the proposition that, in the light of a developing understanding of the nature of humanity and sexuality, the time has arrived for a change in the Church's traditional position on affirming same-gender relationships.

There is general agreement among the bishops that the mind of the Church must be discerned in relation to sexuality in general. The same requirement also applies to any form of new definition or new pastoral practice in relation to the question of ordination, appointments to positions of leadership, or to the blessing of same-sex unions.

The quest for a common mind is not simply an academic exercise. It has long been tacitly if not formally recognised, that homosexual people have held positions of leadership, ordained and lay, within the Church. Their ministry has frequently been highly imaginative and characterised by great pastoral sensitivity that has deeply enriched the lives of those who have experienced it.

We believe that the search for a *modus vivendi* for the Church is more important than the assertion of abstract and disembodied decrees. This search should be undertaken regardless of the conclusions to which the exercise may take us all.

A process of understanding of these issues cannot be furthered without overcoming many of the fears and insecurities that surround this discussion. To that end, where there is discussion, it is most effectively undertaken in a safe space, where people are able to let go of their own agendas without betraying their deeply held convictions, where they are prepared to listen sensitively to one another, and where attitudes of condemnation are avoided.

Where it is felt that there is urgency for discussion to commence within the Church of Ireland, experience has shown that it is much more fruitful to spend time on learning how to listen and to grow in understanding than to move rapidly beyond that stage in a desire to reach conclusions as quickly as possible. For that reason, the conversation surrounding sexuality is not suited, at this stage, to large legislative assemblies.

Where there is dialogue within dioceses and between local communities, it should above all include those who are most immediately affected by the discussion. It cannot be sufficiently emphasised that the quest itself carries its own risks, and should not be undertaken lightly. This is an area of life where deeply held views, powerful emotions and the potential for causing great harm hold sway. We may have to learn how or whether we will be able to live peaceably and with integrity

with very different viewpoints within the family of the Church and the household of faith.

Sunday, 7th September, 2003

**Bishop of Cork's Letter to the Diocese concerning the
*Book of Common Prayer, 2004***

The Right Reverend Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, in a pastoral letter to be read in every church in the Diocese on Sunday 7th September has initiated the Diocesan preparations for the arrival of the new worship book of the Church of Ireland: the *Book of Book of Common Prayer, 2004*. The Bishop said that the arrival of the new book was an opportunity to look at the way we worship and to renew our commitment.

The text of the letter follows:

Pastoral Letter from the Bishop on Sunday, 7th September, 2003

Book of Common Prayer, 2004

Dear Friends in Christ,

The first Sunday of this new Millennium was the first occasion in my Episcopate that I wrote a Pastoral Letter to be read at all Services in the United Dioceses. The occasion of this Pastoral Letter – only my second as Bishop – is no less significant.

The anticipated arrival of the new *Book of Common Prayer, 2004* is a potent opportunity not to be missed in the life of the Church. Worship is the core of our responsibility and witness as Christians.

Our new worship book, which will include both traditional and contemporary language Services in one volume, does not arrive "out of the blue". It will be the newest in an historic line of Books of Common Prayer, starting with the first of

1549, and enriched by no less than eight major revisions over the centuries since, as well as many additional Services intended to meet the needs of the Church throughout the ages and today.

Since 1997 the Liturgical Advisory Committee has been working on this new edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*. In the General Synod, representatives from this Diocese and the other parts of the Church, bringing your experiences and insights from everyday parish worship, have been reviewing, testing, amending and approving the final outcome of this work.

We have planned a special programme to enable us adequately to prepare for the new book when it arrives in our hands during Lent 2004, and in order that we will be ready for its formal and joyful launch in Cork, Cloyne and Ross on Ascension Day, 20th May, 2004.

I invite you to make these months of anticipation an occasion to seek ways to refresh the faithful worship, day by day, Sunday by Sunday and event by event in the lives of you the people of God, in our churches.

Together let us renew our commitment to God the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

The Right Reverend Paul Colton
Bishop of Cork Cloyne and Ross

August 2003

Sunday School Training Day

A Sunday School/Club Training Day for Cork City Rural Deanery was held in the Canon Packham Hall, Douglas, on the morning of Saturday August 30 2003. The main speaker was Bob Miller from ROOTS, the ecumenical Sunday School resource put together by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

Approximately 40 people participated and thoroughly enjoyed the talks, and discussions. Resource packs were provided and a well-stocked, colourful bookstall also proved a valuable source of inspiration and information. The Revd Daniel Nuzum and Mrs Jacqui Wilkinson organised the event in conjunction with the Sunday School Society, providers of the bookstall.

Wednesday, 27th August, 2003

**Cork Bishop at Swedish Ordination
Example of Ecumenical Progress and Church Relations that
Do Work**

The Bishop of Cork, the Right Reverend Paul Colton, will represent the Church of Ireland at, and take part in, the Consecration of two new Swedish Bishops in Uppsala, Sweden on Sunday 31st August next.

Since 1992 the Church of Ireland has been in full-communication with the Church of Sweden (and seven other Lutheran Churches in the Nordic-Baltic region) on foot of an agreement known as the Porvoo (a town in Finland where the participants in the ecumenical conversations met) Agreement.

Bishop Colton was himself a participant in the conversations between 1989 and 1992 which led to this ground-breaking ecumenical agreement between four Anglican Churches (in Great Britain and Ireland) and eight Nordic and Baltic Churches. Members of each Church are recognised as full members of all of the others. There is full interchangeability of ordained clergy between the churches also.

Bishop Colton:

“Often the ecumenical successes of our age receive little public attention in favour of disagreements between and within churches. This, however, is an example of a new and faithful partnership - ecumenical progress - that is working away steadily to draw together over 40 million Christians in Europe in common partnership and Church work.”

Dean Lennart Koskinen is to be ordained Bishop of Visby (an island Diocese in the Baltic), and Dr Carl Axel Aurelius is to be ordained Bishop of Gothenburg, both in a Service in Uppsala Cathedral on Sunday 31st August.

The Porvoo Churches' website may be found at www.porvoochurches.org

Lord Mayor's Visit

The new Lord Mayor of Cork, **Cllr Colm Burke**, paid his first official visit to the Bishop on Wednesday August 20 2003 in the Palace.

During his term of office the Lord Mayor hopes, among other things, to set up a networking group to encourage 60,000 Cork Graduates to act as ambassadors for the city in the areas of industry and tourism. He wants funding from the Government for the new Cork School of Music and for housing waiting lists to be cut.

The Lord Mayor was accompanied by his wife, the Lady Mayoress, who is well known in her own right as Dr Mary Caffrey, a former Assistant Master of the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, who in 1998 was appointed Consultant Obstetrician in Gynaecology in Tralee General Hospital. The Deputy City Manager, Mr Dan Buggy, was also present.

Following the signing of the visitors' book, the party was entertained by the Bishop, Mrs Colton, Adam and Andrew.

July 2003

Wednesday, 23rd July, 2003

Cork Plans for Book of Common Prayer, 2004 Bishop Paul Colton announces Diocesan Programme of Introduction

The Bishop of Cork, the Right Reverend Paul Colton, has unveiled his Dioceses' plans, recently approved by the Diocesan Council, to facilitate the introduction of the new Book of Common Prayer, 2004 in Cork, Cloyne and Ross.

The Book of Common Prayer, 2004, when it arrives next Spring, will be the Church of Ireland's prayer book (following years of work by the Liturgical Advisory Committee and General Synod) embodying traditional Services (old as well as more recent) and new liturgies. It will be the staple diet of the Church's worship day by day, Sunday by Sunday, and event by event in the lives of the people of God.

Bishop Colton said:

"Worship is the highest calling of Christians. The arrival of a new Book of Common Prayer is a wonderful opportunity for renewal in our worship. It is only right that we should, therefore, make the introduction of this prayer book the highest priority in the months to come."

The Dean of Cork, the Very Reverend Michael Burrows, accepted the Bishop's invitation to assist with the programme of introduction. Together they have planned a phased build-up to the publication of the book and its formal launch in the Diocese on Ascension Day, 20th May 2004.

The programme kicks off on the first Sunday of September with a Pastoral Letter from the Bishop to be read in all Churches, and includes: a Diocesan Information Leaflet; a full familiarisation briefing for Diocesan Council members; training opportunities for Readers and Clergy; Rural Deanery visits by the Bishop with BCP 2004 as the focus; a new page on the Diocesan Website; an especially prepared "Teaching Eucharist"; a focus throughout the Diocese in Lent 2004 on the Daily Prayer material in the new book; four opportunities to experience some of the book's Services in each Church; a poster build-up; articles in the Diocesan Magazine; and material for use in schools.

A key element will be training sessions for the Clergy (under the auspices of the Diocesan Continuing Ministerial Education programme) entitled Training for Difference which will include sessions on the Psalter; Holy Baptism; Service of the Word; Enriching the Contemporary Language Eucharist; and Rediscovering the Traditional Language Eucharist. Preparations for the Book of Common Prayer, 2004 will also be the mainstay of work at the annual Diocesan Clergy Conference in October next.

June 2003

Ordinations at St Peter's Church Bandon

On Tuesday June 24 2003, in a packed St Peter's Church, the Bishop ordained the Reverend Stella Mikhail and the Reverend Joy Ferguson to the priesthood.

Since June 2002 Stella Mikhail has served as Curate Assistant in Bandon Union of Parishes and, following her time as Deacon in Moviddy Union, Joy Ferguson will now serve as Priest with a General Licence in the Non-Stipendiary Ministry and will also be based in Bandon Union.

The preacher at the service was The Reverend Rupert Moreton, Anglican Chaplain, Helsinki.

The Ordination of Hazel Minion to the Diaconate

The torrential rain of **Monday June 9 2003** could not but have dampened Hazel Minion in body and spirit as this was the day of her ordination, but she need not have worried. Inside St Fin Barre's Cathedral a vast array of clergy, lay readers, school colleagues, students, and friends had come from all quarters of the Diocese to celebrate, support and pray with Hazel as she embarked on this new journey in her life. And what a happy evening it was.

The Archdeacon presented Hazel to the Bishop for ordination, the First Reading was given by her niece, Heather Minion, and the Second Reading was by Ashton Student Colin Ross. Ashton students also sang and played the hymn *Here I am Lord* during Holy Communion while children of all ages were much in evidence, as one would have expected.

It was appropriate too that Bishop Roy Warke returned to the diocese to preach and he pointed out the many changes and challenges that have come to ministry since he was ordained fifty years ago. Accordingly, "In her person Hazel symbolises this development of ministry. She is auxiliary, non-stipendiary and female, and has entered the ministry as a mature student, and we thank God that today within our Church such diversity is possible, enabling the Church to be enriched by the gifts of those who previously were denied the opportunity of service in the ordained ministry."

The haunting music of bagpipes towards the end of Holy Communion complemented the silent reflection that followed and shortly afterwards the new Deacon walked from the Cathedral "in the steps of the saints." Refreshments by candlelight were then served in Ashton School giving everyone a chance to mingle and relax.

As former teacher and current Chaplain in Ashton Hazel needs no introduction to the Diocese. She has been a Lay Reader since 1990 and in 1996 moved from being an English Teacher to the School Chaplaincy.

While continuing with her School Chaplaincy Hazel now joins Templebreedy Group of Parishes. She comes across as a humble person, but with such a range of experience and qualities. The question 'Why did you enter the Church?' does not need to be asked. It's obvious.

Diocesan Synod 2003

It would happen that the Diocesan Synod of 2003 was held on a day when the sun shone brilliantly all day long! However, Synod members were eager to partake in the day's agenda so willingly put the sun behind them.

The Bishop welcomed members and visitors and this year it was the **Revd Adrian Wilkinson's** turn to lead Synod in prayer. **Mr Lyndon Mc Cann SC** was appointed Assessor and the newly ordained **Revd Hazel Minion** was also welcomed and added to the list of Members of Synod. **Mr Keith Roberts** was elected as lay member of the Representative Church Body and elected to the General Synod Board of Education were the **Archdeacon**, clerical member, and **Mr Brian Cairns**, lay member.

As members warmly applauded the Bishop on his Address there was a slight uneasiness - would there be a stampede to the podium, would there be angry confrontation? As it happened, in the allotted time of thirty minutes there were eleven speakers all grateful for the opportunity to express an opinion: **Mr David Syms, Mr Robin Newenham, The O Donovan, Canon Patrick Hewitt, Mr Richard Dring, Dean Chris Peters, Mr Tom Scott, Dean Michael Burrows, Mr George Stoney, The Revd Brian O Rourke and Mr Alan Clayton.**

Some of the points raised were the need for further action on social issues, the reliability of statistics, reaching out to young people and life after the closure of churches. **The O Donovan** regretted that General Synod had voted out the Cork proposition regarding the recruitment of new clergy to parishes thereby shortening an interregnum. He cited the example of the recent appointment of the new headmaster of Midleton College while the current headmaster is still in office. This is businesslike, makes sense and does not cause embarrassment, he said, and he knew of no other organisation that deals with appointments as the Church of Ireland does.

Canon Hewitt was pleased that the Bishop had referred to the shortage of clergy because, as Director of Ordinands, he too is acutely aware of this problem. We blame others for this, he said, but blame gets us nowhere. Clergy come from one place; the pews in our places of worship and so he recommended that people should ask themselves Has God given me the gift and the abilities to fulfil a role in the Church of God? Help and support are offered to those considering ordination and such a decision can bring great joy and satisfaction.

As a lay reader, **Richard Dring** felt that the Bishop's words were a challenge to all to reach out to areas in our parishes and dioceses not yet reached. He would like patterns of worship to change so as to reach the very young and young married couples. Because of working lives there may never be a day when the family sits down together and many feel that Sunday is their only day of rest or a day for sporting activities. He suggested greater flexibility regarding services and the use of some days other than Sundays for worship to fill new voids.

Dean Peters thought the Bishop's speech was a brave one, especially his bold and realistic statement "What we have is not sustainable". Parishes and clergy face many difficulties but the challenge is for all to find what is sustainable, to move in that direction and face the new opportunities in the time ahead.

According to **Dean Burrows** one of the most exciting and different happening of the moment is the number of people from other cultures who have joined us, making up approximately 20% of some congregations. He urges members to affirm and encourage these newcomers to become involved in our parishes and he hoped we would soon see some of these who represent ethnic richness being ordained.

Alan Clayton introduced the V-word: vision. He wished that, instead of being bogged down by bureaucracy, performance, finance and such, "having dreams and having vision" would over ride all. Vision will provide the answers to other problems.

The time allotted to this debate flew and the impression given was one of light seeping through procedure and listeners and speakers revelled in this added perspective to the Bishop's Address. Then it was back to the fixed agenda.

Canon JLB Deane presented the communications from General Synod and **Mr Keith Roberts** gave a personal viewpoint on General Synod. **Mr Sam Jennings** presented the Diocesan Council Report, giving a clear and thorough summation of points raised in the report. He also passed comment on diocesan support for people with special needs, alcohol abuse and how rural decline hurts rural communities. **Dean Marley** seconded the Report.

Twelve members spoke to the report covering such topics as assessment levies, Church Army, insurance, youth ministry, heritage and Continuing Ministry Education.

On the subject of restoration and repair of church buildings, the **Revd Daniel Nuzum** expressed a real need for a centre where one could "touch base" and find advice on all aspects of upkeep and preservation of buildings, as methods have changed and often parishes make costly mistakes when repairing buildings, believing that what is being done is the correct and financially viable way. He hoped the Property Committee would look into this.

Mr Alwyn Williams expressed admiration for the communications revolution and wondered whether these new methods, especially Powerpoint, could be used in churches. Sermons on Powerpoint or charts might result in worthwhile discussion and remembrance of sermon subject matter. He agreed there was an acute problem regarding "young people and their non-involvement in church", but he also made a case for the elderly, particularly the house bound. Perhaps services could be recorded and brought to such people to alleviate their sense of alienation from parish involvement.

In explaining the financial allowance to St Fin Barre's Cathedral from Diocesan Funds, as stated in the accounts, Dean Burrows made an impassioned plea for the diocese to consider the future of the "flagship" cathedral because of running costs and insurance and the need to keep this "unique architectural gem" in the Church of Ireland's possession.

The Diocesan Council report, including amendments and motions, was adopted.

Standing Orders were again suspended to allow the **Revd Laurence Graham** of the Methodist Church to address the synod. Making full and colourful use of the screen he proved that the Covenant is all about united mission - not "tea-party ecumenism"- in a world that needs Christ.

In proposing the adoption of the Report of the Diocesan Board of Education, **Mr Brian Cairns** thanked all board members for their work on behalf of education and the support given to young people of the diocese. The new acts on Education and Welfare were still being studied but were already placing further burdens of responsibility on School Managers. He also hoped that Synod members might consider going on to Management Boards. **Mr Bill Perrott**, seconding the Report, told of the usefulness of the seminars that were held for managers and board members on ethos, litigation and interview skills. **Mrs Judy Peters** asked that the Board of Education be more imaginative in its distribution of funding and she was saddened by the suspension of the library grant.

The Diocesan Youth Council was set up last year, thanks to the efforts of **Mrs Peters** and this year four people were elected on the council: **The Revd Daniel Owen, Dean Marley and Alex Newenham and Helen Jary.**

The first Report of the Church in Society, proposed by **Dean Peters** and seconded by the **Revd Brian O'Rourke**, was adopted and one of the issues brought up was the Environment and how to deal with it. Standing orders were suspended and a Transition Year student from Midleton College, **Shane Fleming**, gave an excellent and thought-provoking report on a recent seminar, "How Green is your God", held in Ardfallen Centre, Cork, for TY students from Bandon Grammar School, Ashton School and Midleton College and comprising talks by ecologists, a questionnaire and workshop. Shane told of the questions posed and the solutions the groups came up with, the strongest statement from them being that " young people enjoy but don't value the environment."

The Report of the Diocesan Council for Mission was proposed by the **Revd Ian Jonas** who said there as a real need to understand the overseas Church. A green sheet had been placed on every chair detailing the recommendations and challenges put to the diocese by Mission Resource Person, The Revd Charles Irwin. Perusal of this is worthwhile. "Charles encouraged us to have vision that ultimately leads to action." The **Revd Francis Rutledge**, in seconding the report, said that the Church needs people with laser-like focus on mission, especially the young who are willing to try and explore new thinking. **The Revd Eileen Cremin** was then elected as Diocesan Synod member of the Diocesan Council for Mission, replacing **Canon Paul Draper**.

It fell to **Eileen Cremin** to propose the adoption of the Diocesan Church Music Committee Report and she urged parishes to value their musicians who are a "wonderful asset."

The final motion of the day, that the Synod take into consideration the general state of the Church in the United Dioceses, proposed by **Canon Deane**, proved of vital importance as, according to him, "there are many things that should be done in the diocese and things that should no longer be done". He raised concerns such as committee membership and lay people's willingness or non-willingness to serve on committees, parish vacancies and clergy shortage. He believes a time will come when there are no clergy available to fill vacancies and he put it to Synod to take action at diocesan level before a crisis develops and not to wait until a no-hope situation arrives.

The **Revd Peter Hanna**, seconding the motion, said the picture must be broadened to look at reasons behind this situation. Perhaps the Church of Ireland has become too institutionalised and needs the inspiration to become a new church movement again.

Mr John Stanley spoke of the complacency and baggage of the Church of Ireland and felt that a crisis point has been reached, therefore we must think about our needs in this present time.

The use of Lay Readers for Sunday duty was raised by **David Syms** and his queries answered by **Wilfred Baker**. **Robin Newenham** hoped the diocese

would encourage the ideas and enthusiasm of young people while **the O Donovan** stressed that even the aged wanted immediate results.

Thanks to **Dean Burrows** the discussion ended on a note of optimism. If the Church has something to say to today's society people will notice and if people stop asking does God exist and replace it with does God make any difference, then Church will improve.

As if to send us scattering home with crystal lights sparkling on our new visions and dreams, one chandelier in the hall began to rattle and shake above the heads of a row of clergy. All but one stayed put. Does this mean that the Diocese is being led by fearless persons who are all set to take what might come in their stride?

Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross
Diocesan Synod Address given in Rochestown, Co. Cork
by The Right Rev. Paul Colton
Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross
14th June 2003

Introduction

Dear friends in Christ, we meet in his name, as the pilgrim people of God, to do the work of his Church and I thank you for your attendance at this Diocesan Synod of Cork, Cloyne and Ross - my fifth as Bishop!

This year, unlike other years, I have chosen not to comment on any of the many issues of national relevance. Instead I have chosen an introspective approach: looking at ourselves in order to strengthen our engagement with our core activities and our obligations to wider households of society and the Church.

Consultation about *Diocesan Synod*

As promised last year I undertook a process of consultation about the format of Diocesan Synod. I am grateful to all who replied and you have clearly set out for you the fruits of that study. It was subsequently debated by Diocesan Council and a group set up to look at it.

As an experiment this year, at the conclusion of this address you will be afforded, an opportunity to discuss the issues raised. Again at your suggestion we are experimenting with PowerPoint.

The motion that has been tabled for the end of the day is also a reminder to all of us of the possibilities afforded by the correct use of our forum and its procedures.

Most of all I wish to take the opportunity, as you did in your replies to the consultation to affirm the importance of the work of Diocesan Synod. We should not forget that, as things are presently structured, Diocesan Synod facilitates that administration which empowers the framework of ministry within the Diocese. Without it we could not get on with our business from year to year. It is a worrying trend, as I said in a recent issue of the Diocesan Magazine, when some undervalue Synod, by non-attendance or disparaging remarks.

Five Year Overview

Heading for the five year point in a ministry inevitably brings with it a measure of reflection and analysis. But how do you measure ministry or the life of a Church? At a confirmation recently a visiting godparent suggested to me that on a Monday morning the clergy should be required to submit to me as "area manager" the figures for the previous week. The Church is not measurable in those sort of ways, yet there are defining minimums: for example, the conduct of worship, the care of the sick, visiting and knowing the people etc.

Another Ministry Dominated Year

It will come as no surprise that this has been another year dominated by the theme of ministry. There was the Ministry Summit in September with a follow-up meeting in March. Our Ministry Advisory Group has been continuing its work.

The reality is not comfortable

Strategic Planning

On 1st May there were 47 vacant parishes (just over 10% of all the parishes) in the Church of Ireland, and since then we know of two further ones in our own Diocese making three this year: Fermoy (an appointment which has now lapsed to me as Bishop), and coming up Abbeystrewry and Youghal. On an encouraging

note two people from the Diocese have offered themselves and, this month, been approved for training for ordination.

There seems, however, to be little sense of all-island overview of this dilemma. Boards of Nomination and Bishops in each Diocese simply work away trying to fill gaps as they arise. We take from one and another takes from us. Pieces are moving around as on a chessboard, but the fact that pieces are missing from the set rendering the game unplayable in this format hasn't been grappled with.

It is against this type of background that I regret the inability of the Church of Ireland nearly 7 years ago to undertake the then researched and advocated process of Strategic Planning. Instead of the proactive addressing of infrastructural and policy issues we have reactively lurched from issue to issue, even turning a blind eye to some core pressures such as this on our existence as a Church. When we meet nationally as a Church we seem to become paralysed at the thought of institutional change, while paradoxically being quite creative in the area of worship.

A case in point this year, were the admirable efforts on the part of some in this Diocese to loosen up, as an option, the timetable for working on the recruitment of new clergy to parishes. In what was interpreted by many as a regrettable act of self-interest, some clergy (but sufficient to make a majority in that order) voted it out. The irony is that no doubt some of those clergy, bemoan what they perceive as the inertia of the laity in other spheres of the Church's life. Furthermore many laity, who in their own careers are not immune from the changes and chances of life, cannot understand why some of the clergy were not prepared to expose themselves to some level of vulnerability in order to provide that flexibility in the process which have facilitated this aspect of the Church's work.

In my view there is far too much instability in the deployment of the ministry within the Church: a more stable pattern is, at least in this Diocese, perhaps a pipe dream, but much needed at this juncture for the sake of the Gospel and the ministry entrusted to us.

Turning to ministry.... and first to the ministry of lay people:

Lay Ministry

The ministry we have is God's ministry entrusted to all of who are. Those of us who are priests do well to remember - to use the title of Father George Guiver's recent book - that God calls us to be "Priests in a People's Church"

In this connection I wish today to affirm and underscore the potent lay ministry that is already at work in this diocese. I have to say that I find unsubstantiated, and at times verging on the insulting, the implication sometimes levelled that lay ministry is not potent in the Church of Ireland.

Going around the Diocese with that distinctive overview a Bishop has, I have seen lay people

1. participating in the leading of worship both alone and alongside the clergy
2. engaged in confirmation preparation
2. doing visiting in hospitals and homes
3. sustaining the work of our schools, notably in management and in the education partnership
4. shaping the activities of young people
5. making immense sacrifices for uniformed youth organisations
6. bringing their faith into daily lives in the work place
7. doing what needs to be done in the parishes
8. chipping in with the gifts that the clergy do not have
9. fund-raising
10. expanding the horizons of their faith through the Bishop's Course in Theology and a host of other programmes
11. serving on the committees we as a diocese and church have chosen to appoint
12. shaping and sustaining the future of institutions with diocesan links such as St Luke's Home, Garryduff, Lapps Court, Kingston College, the Gift Houses in Kinsale and in a host of other charities and projects.
13. And this ministry is at its most potent in the involvement of so many of you in the wider life and institutions of our Irish society, something which cannot be dislocated from our Christian vocation by a blinkered and sterile definition of the life of faith.

Where we as a Church let you and one another down is when

14. we put too many expectations on a number of extremely sacrificial individuals

15. we fail to provide enough training and the backup that is so crucial to so many of these activities

Cutbacks

Turning to the matter of the resources that are needed to provide this ministry, people, referring to the unfolding economic stringencies of the time, occasionally say to me that the Diocese has to find ways to cut back. And like every organisation it probably does. What is usually meant, however, is that the cutback should come in the amount of the Diocesan Assessment sought from parishes.

This, I believe, is the last place where cutbacks should happen. The assessment provides for the ministry - the work, a core activity of the Church. Far from cutting core activity, we need to sustain, develop and innovate in that area. If we curtail the distinctive offering we make - our ministry in worship, pastoral care and mission we are left with little else to offer that is relevant.

The question then has to be asked "where else might we cut back?" What are we spending too much on? We need honestly to ask ourselves what infrastructure do we actually need for the work of the Church in our area. Do we need all 76 worship venues, for example?

These have to be questions that are addressed locally in the parishes. We have seen before how centralised decision-making, albeit following local consultation, cultivates its own set of problems and hurts. Youghal, Moviddy and St Luke's are examples of local reflection at Select Vestry level that has led to strategic change.

What worries me is that many places, rooted in a "keep the show on the road" syndrome, are not reflecting incisively in a way that would be more conducive to, in fact, sustaining the life of the Church meaningfully. Only you in the parishes can do that, and when you do the Diocese as a whole will endeavour to support you.

Too much for too few

Now that I'm in my fifth year as Bishop my sense of the Diocese is that too few people are trying to do too much. I make two propositions to challenge you:

We are trying to sustain too much infrastructure.

As a result we may be denying resources for the provision of new forms of ministry - our core activity, as I say.

The multiplicity of venues gives rise, for example, to another syndrome: the clergy, readers and retired clergy are having to sustain too demanding a pattern of worship each Sunday: a schedule which, in many cases, goes beyond the spiritual resources any one individual might have. My colleagues and friends in other Churches abroad are often astonished to hear some of our clergy take up to five Services a Sunday. "How can you preach and lead worship meaningfully more than once they ask? Which human being has the spiritual resources and to do that?" The rushing around parishes, with no time for the people truly to gather with the pastor, is, I believe, detrimental to one of our strong points: that sense of worship and community life - priest and people together in the life of faith.

The simple reality is that what we have at the moment and what we are trying to sustain is not sustainable in the way in which we are currently addressing it. This is most notable at a time of vacancy in parishes. I remarked at one juncture last year in the Diocesan Council that it would only take one more of the clergy to get sick and we would be unable to provide the services that are required. At Christmas and Easter we had to find alternative ways of making the necessary Eucharistic provision. With my authorisation, at short notice, in two situations, a person other than a priest had to bring the already consecrated bread and wine (as indeed happened in the early Church) to worshipping communities, which would, otherwise, not have been able to receive Holy Communion on the festivals in question.

The Need for Foresight

Against this background I believe, far too much of the life in our parishes is characterised by reactivity. Under God we need to take more responsibility for ourselves - in imaginative planning, in deciding what needs to be done, and in resourcing it.

Examples of this reactive approach might well be:

1. If there's something to be fixed someone will fix it.
2. If we need to pay for something we'll pay for it.

Those are good qualities of faithfulness but they need to be augmented with additional approaches, and tested by bigger questions:

2. what is the role and work of the Church in this place?
3. Is the way we are currently working the most potent in terms of the use of our resources?

ICICYMA

We have examples in our diocesan life of such proactivity.

Recently I was at the victory dinner for Cork Church of Ireland Hockey Club; to celebrate the win by men's team of the all Ireland Club Championships: a significant and noteworthy achievement. Looking around at Garryduff brought back memories. When that place was a private house remote in the countryside I recall going there to play with a friend. Hockey matches were on the grass pitch where Lapps Court is on the Glasheen Road.

It really was quite an act of faith and foresight way back then to "up sticks" and move out to the country. Now, all those years later, Garryduff is well-located in a place of vibrant relevance and opportunity at the heart of a local community.

I mention this because it is a commendable and challenging example to the diocese of foresight, faith and strategic planning that has been fruitful.

Training

When it comes to ministry today and the work of the Church in general it is clear to me that the era of training people at the start of their ministerial careers and letting them get on with it, boosted by up to date reading and study, is no longer sustainable. In-service training can no longer be the *Cinderella* of our strategy.

Clergy and CME

I have made the resourcing of the clergy a central plank in these early years of my episcopate, and the scope of that has been limited by resources,

notwithstanding your freewill generosity at confirmations and ordinations, as well as small annual grant from the *Priorities' Fund*.

In the materials circulated to you, you will have noticed a summary of a study document I tabled at Diocesan Council concerning *Continuing Ministerial Education*. Learning is a life-long process. The purpose of CME is to equip and develop the Church's minister in order that they may stimulate and enable the whole Church to participate ore fully in the mission of God in the world.

I run the risk of saying that a lot has been done but there is more to do. In order to facilitate that core strategy a resolution is being tabled before you today by Diocesan Council concerning funding, which I hope you will support.

Safeguarding Trust

Another illustration of the need for on-going training is in the area of the Church's policy on child protection *Safeguarding Trust*. This policy was coming on stream before and just at the time I arrived as Bishop. I am concerned at the patchy implementation of the policy in parts of the Diocese, and it will be one of the crucial tasks between now and next year's Synod to address this matter.

Diocesan Ministry Day

In relation to Ministry, we thank those who represented us at the Church of Ireland Summit on Ministry. You will gather from my address that issues of ministry in the widest sense need to be addressed locally within the Diocese. In order to give leadership in stimulating that reflection I have planned, and will ask Diocesan Council at its meeting in 11 days time to endorse my plan, to host a day of reflection on ministry in the Diocese on Saturday 27th September in the Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery - a day for representatives from the parish, Diocesan Council and those engaged in ministry, ordained and lay. I have recruited a willing facilitator in the person of the Reverend Chris Webb, who is Renewal Officer with the Council for Mission and Ministry of the Church in Wales. He spoke ably at the meeting of Celtic Bishops in Llandudno last October and his presentation would, I believe, by analogy, enable and empower us here too.

Visit of the Commission on Ministry

Coincidentally and happily, one week later, by decision of the House of Bishops, representatives of the Commission on Ministry will visit the Diocese on 4th

October to hear our response to and engagement with the issues raised at the national Summit on Ministry.

Accumulated Challenges

In these two ways, we will have the opportunity to reflect creatively and practically. Practical that reflection must be.

We have all seen, in recent years, how an intensifying social and legal scenario is affecting the life of the Church. It was always expected that churches should not only keep the law, legitimate practice, but also be to the fore as role models and pace setters: best practice.

The first sign that I remember in my ministry of the arrival of the new era was that of health and safety. I expect all our parishes and schools now have their health and safety statements. Soon afterwards there was a new awareness of Copyright, and yet many parishes are still infringing this one week by week.

Then the list accelerated:

4. the Education Act, 1998
5. the Equal Status Act, 2000
6. the planning legislation with the consequent listing of most of our buildings
7. just six weeks ago there was new Data Protection legislation

It worries me when Churches seek derogations from legislative developments that are being imposed on every one else in society. Of course our right to freedom of religious belief has to be balanced with the other rights being legislated for, but religious belief is too easily invoked in order to perpetuate injustice or inappropriate attitudes. Moreover, where we ought in the past to have been leaders in best practice, we have not always done so.

People with Disabilities

A relevant case in point in this European Year of the Disabled, as the Olympic flame journeys around Ireland and as we prepare to celebrate the Special Olympics here, is that of the proposed disability legislation. Late last I was told by a legislator not to worry about the possible disability legislation. "Churches will be exempt", he said. Recently I mentioned this to a lawyer friend who works for the

disabled, and he quite rightly said "Why would it take legislation for Churches to do the right thing for disabled people any way?"

He is right. Areas like these are ones in which the churches, as a matter of moral imperative, should be to the fore in best practice, in showing the way as an expression of gospel values of Jesus' love, inclusiveness and solidarity.

This raises many questions about many of our properties, though there are some notable examples around the diocese where huge work has been done to make buildings suitable and inclusive.

16. What about gravel paths and uneven approaches for the elderly and infirm?

17. Proximate car parking?

18. Steps?

19. Space in our churches so that those in wheelchairs can be truly, physically in the congregation.

20. Not just for those who travel, but also for other locally - what about toilet facilities? Somewhere for baby-changing

21. Running hot water to wash hands

22. What about those who are hard of hearing?

Much of the resulting exclusion is unwitting. Nonetheless, in these, and in so many other ways, I believe we have a lot of catching up to do.

Diocesan Office

This has been highlighted for us in the past year with another example at Diocesan level in relation to the accommodation we rent for our diocesan office space. It is upstairs, without a lift, and with limited and haphazard parking opportunities.

A review is under way and consideration is being given to the re-location of the office. Addressing all of these things costs money.

Looking ahead - six things:

The year ahead will be busy. Certainly I can see six major things on the agenda;

23. the review of the implementation of *Safeguarding Trust*

24. the reflection on ministry that I've just described

25. the General Synod has sent to us, for response before next January its study on sectarianism within the life of the Church entitled *The Hard Gospel*. This will necessitate an additional meeting of Diocesan Synod to address this theme later in the year. In that regard the Bishops of Cashel and Limerick have accepted the suggestion that we consider holding a regional synod to undertake that work.

26. We are invited to prepare for and to engage with the potential offered by the fact that in 2005 Cork will be European Capital of Culture.

27. At General Synod the Archbishop of Armagh signalled that the Bishops intend later this year to issue a discussion paper about human sexuality.

28. And then there will be most exciting arrival of the new *Book of Common Prayer* which will be in our hands and on our pews this time next year.

Book of Common Prayer, 2004

The new *Book of Common Prayer* will replace both the *Book of Common Prayer* as revised in 1926 and the *Alternative Prayer Book*, 1984, bringing together in one volume the best of old and new has now passed through General Synod This time next year it will be in our hand and on our pews. The Dean of Cork has accepted my invitation to assist in its introduction in the Diocese. He and I will put before Diocesan Council a programme to that end at our next meeting.

Covenant with the Methodist Church

Our Covenant with the Methodist Church in Ireland is an inspiring opportunity to catalyse our ministry in new and exciting directions. Copies were circulated for display in each parish. At the end of the day the Covenant, if it is to be meaningful, has to find tangible expression locally. It cannot be worked out by the Diocese alone. I'm delighted to welcome all our ecumenical guests and visitors here today, but in the light of the signing of our covenant with the Methodist Church, I look forward later on, with your permission, to inviting the Reverend Laurence Graham to address us, and we welcome him to our Synod today.

The Right Reverend Roy Warke

I am sure Synod would wish to send its greetings to my predecessor, the Right Reverend Roy Warke on the forthcoming 50th anniversary of his ordination.

The Right Reverend Sam Poyntz

In the same vein, next September, the Right Reverend Sam Poyntz will celebrate the silver jubilee of his ordination as Bishop. We salute him also.

The Reverend Canon Oliver Peare and Mrs Norah Good

During the year we were saddened by the death of a faithful priest of the Diocese. With his gentle, affable and kindly personality, his pastoral instincts and perceptive mind, Canon Oliver Peare, was much loved. Born in 1917 he came to this Diocese in 1955, serving successively in Youghal, Abbeystrewry and Kinsale; and offering his ministry to the wider Church as Rural Dean, on Diocesan Council, many other Diocesan committees as well as General Synod and Standing Committee.

More recently we were saddened by the death in Easter Week of Mrs Norah Good, a member of this Diocesan Synod, a Diocesan Reader, who also served the Diocese in her membership of General Synod, central Church Committees and Diocesan Council. She was also our representative on CACTM, the Central Advisory Council on Training for the Ministry and a tutor in Church History.

We remember them both with profound thanksgiving and extend our sympathy to their families and friends.

Deployments

Since last Diocesan Synod the Archdeacon, the Very Reverend Michael Burrows, Canon George Hilliard and the Very Reverend Alan Marley all made internal moves to Moviddy, St Fin Barre's, UCC and Cloyne respectively. The Reverend Hazel Minion was ordained last Monday night and we congratulate and welcome her. The Rev. Joy Ferguson and the reverend Stella Mikhail (not with us today because I asked them to go on retreat - the only time when the retreat house could facilitate them) were ordained deacon last year and are to be ordained priest in 10 days. The Reverends Andrew McCroskery, Judith Hubbard-Jones, Nigel Dunne and Daniel Owen arrived in the Diocese for the first time; and the Reverend Adrian Wilkinson returned to join our work of ministry here in Cork, Cloyne and Ross.

The Reverend Peter Anderson moved to the South of France, as did the Reverend Peter Massey. The term of the contract of Captain Keith Dyde came to an end and he returned to work in England.

Soon the Reverend Trevor Lester will leave for Waterford, and we congratulate him on his appointment as Dean; and the Reverend Sue Watterson will leave to become Warden of the Church's Ministry of Healing.

This is a lot of change in just one year in a small organisation. So it's been a busy year also for Boards of Nomination. I take this opportunity to thank all parochial and diocesan members of the Committee of Patronage.

Wider scenario

Much of what I have said is inward looking to our work as a Diocese and Church. None of what I have said detracts from our obligation to live out our discipleship in an exciting but challenging society and world, in ecumenical fellowship with our brothers and sisters; in dialogue with people of other faiths; and together with all among whom we discover common ground and cause.

Thank you

As always I could not approach the end of my address without highlighting my immense gratitude to so many people who serve the diocese in so many ways: to the Archdeacon; our Diocesan Communications Officer who is so creative in her communication of what we are doing; our Diocesan Webmaster Brendan Kearns; our Diocesan Architect, Bill Brady; our Diocesan Registrar, John Jermyn, his secretary Jean Wade and the so-many colleagues in that law firm who advise me generously on hosts of occasions ; and my own secretary, Ruth Wolfe; to Ruby Veitch, assistant secretary at the Diocesan Office whose halo I can't polish enough, and to our Diocesan Secretary, Wilfred Baker - in the Church of Ireland Gazette Cromlyn wrote that he had never heard of him before - "where has Cromlyn been all these years that he has missed out on our gem who steadily does so much for the Diocese and for the Church in the Southern Province?". Thank you to each and everyone of you for all that you do.

For my part as Bishop looking back on these approaching five years it has been demanding and at times frustrating: to say otherwise would be foolish. It has also been rewarding. In the past year I was pleased to travel to Finland to preach at the tenth anniversary Service marking the signing of the Porvoo Agreement with which I was involved so closely; and also to make a four day pastoral visit to President Pat Cox, at the European Parliament; there were the great number of early morning journeys to Dublin with the consequent opportunity to scrutinise the works on the Port Tunnel in that city - I spent so long sitting on that M1 in cars that I think I have nearly served my apprenticeship as a construction worker; but let me assure you, that after all those distractions, it is the round of Episcopal ministry in the Diocese, brining me into contact with you my fellow

pilgrims in faith that has sustained and strengthened me for our journey together.

It is this to business-like reflection on this pilgrimage together here in Cork, Cloyne and Ross that we turn as we being our work as a Diocesan Synod today.

In the face of so many great challenge we might be tempted to despair or to shake our heads with "argh", but we trust that God the Holy Trinity who calls us together, will bless us all as we seek to be faithful to his calling.

+Paul Cork:

14th June, 2003

May 2003

Kilgariffe Union points the way

For years the Parochial Hall in Clonakilty stood with no indication of ownership, it was just another building. Because of this Kilgariffe Select Vestry decided it was time to take action -- a notice board would be erected, but not just a factual, rarely looked at notice board. A sign writer was commissioned to produce an eye-catching, meaningful board and, as the photograph shows, he has done just that! The board displays a potted history of each of the four churches, times of services and a wonderful diagram of the locality showing not only the churches but also aspects of community life; farming, a show ground, sporting and leisure activities and parochial activities. The colourful board blends well with the other signs of the town and is a positive 'shop window' for Kilgariffe Union.

Thanks are due to sign writer, Tomas Tuipear, Donal Mc Carthy who produced the board and to local businesses and Cork County Council for providing financial support.

The notice board was dedicated by the Bishop on May 25 2003.

The Gospel Rocky Show

Father Matthew Hall, Cork. Two performances, Monday May 26 2003

"Oh yes, he is," shouted the Dean from Cloyne. "Oh yes, he is," shouted the

Canon from Ballydehob. "Oh yes, he is," shouted the Lay Reader from Carrigaline. "Oh, yes he is," shouted the teachers. "Oh, yes he is," SCREAMED the children as the cast of the Gospel Rocky Show, "A reason to celebrate", led them from one nail-biting decision to the next.

It was pantomime at its best -- catchy music, wonderful scenes on the beach, the pier, under the sea and a spluttering, colourful bus full of singing children.

Nobody in the audience needed the programme note 'to cheer, boo, shout, clap, tap your feet and sing along as loud as you can,' the audience participation was active and loud, very loud! (Oh yes, it WAS)

There were hazardous cliffs, child-swallowing whales, jet-skis, an octopus and a scheming, nasty, wicked villain. But he mended his evil ways, repented and was nice to the Cork children who joined him on stage near the end to sing What a wonderful world.

Following pantomime tradition there was a distinct message, this time a religious one. Through the life and actions of Jesus it is easy for people to discover how special they are to God and the depth of his love for all. In fact, the cast impressed on us that Jesus is worth making a song and dance about.

And did the schoolchildren enjoy it? They adored it. St Luke's School, Douglas, has even provided some feedback. Sara thought the show was "brilliant. My favourite part was the music." Jack liked "the free candy and the band" and, collectively, the Senior Infants chose "the baddie being choked by the octopus; when the policeman put the yellow line down; and when all the children were dancing." "Brilliant" was the most used word.

Many thanks to the Church Army personnel from Stoke-on-Trent: Frank McGregor, director, his cast of grown ups and children and to his stage and production teams for such a "brilliant" experience.

April 2003

History is made!

St Michael's Church, Blackrock, was the scene of double celebrations on Sunday April 27 2003. Seven young parishioners of Douglas Union with Frankfield (St Luke's, St Michael's, Frankfield, Marmullane) were confirmed by the Bishop and, not only was this the first Confirmation Service to be held in the church for 78 years, but one of the seventeen candidates from the service of 1925, Mrs Barbara de Foubert MBE, was present and singing in the choir as she always does. This added an unexpected historical touch to the service and was applauded by all

present. A group photograph including Mrs de Foubert was taken to mark this happy occasion.

Bishop Paul Colton says Many do not experience Church as a Community of the Resurrection

The Church perpetuates the sense of Crucifixion experienced by many

In his sermon at the Easter Eucharist in Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork on Easter Day 2003 the Right Reverend Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross said that the Church has not always lived up to its calling as a resurrection community.

"The tragedy is" he said, "that we in the Church, the community of the resurrection, have at times thoughtlessly and through lack of care perpetuated the sense of crucifixion being experienced by many."

He said:

"Throughout history, this has happened most often when the Church becomes more concerned with its own survival and image than with the people it is called to embrace and the good news it announces. It happens most of all when we try to make God smaller than he is, and to limit the divine love only to people who are like ourselves, or almost."

"We are all too aware that for many in our world, living is a hellish crucifixion experience: not only the dramatic victims of war, terrorism, oppression and injustice; but also the silent sufferers of illness, loneliness, alienation and isolation whose plod through life weighs them down to breaking point."

"I think of those who suffer because we have failed to open the arms of welcome; of the pain that flows from the inflexibility of our doctrinal posturing and our ecumenical frigidity. Then there are those who, by being different, or by labels they do not choose for themselves but which we slap on them, are pushed by us to the edge; those who do not fit into our sense of order. There are those who have fallen who we have not reached out to and helped up. There are the bridges we fail to build; the embrace we do not offer; the ill-chosen words; sadly the

list is endless of those whose experience of the Easter community, the Church, has, far from being one of resurrection, been that of crucifixion. "

"Easter Message – a Challenge to Reconciliation"

Easter message from the Right Reverend Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross

"The Easter story tells of a stone rolled back and an empty tomb. As I think about that stone being rolled away, I think of barriers coming down. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross and his Easter resurrection were an act of reconciliation. In a deeply divided and worried world it is worth reminding ourselves that this work of reconciliation has now been entrusted to us. In the times in which we live we face no greater challenge than to roll away the stones of division and to heal the hurts of a wounded humanity.

Happy Easter!

March 2003

New Church of Ireland Rector comes to Cobh and Glanmire Union

The Parishes of Cobh and Glanmire Union recently welcomed their new, young rector into their midst. He is the Revd Daniel Owen, formerly Curate - Assistant of the Parish of St Donard, Diocese of Down and Dromore.

The Institution took place on March the 19th 2003 in Christ Church, Rushbrooke, with the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, The Right Revd Paul Colton, presiding. The large numbers of people who attended were testament to the unity of these parishes, to the sense of Christian unity of the local community and to the warm welcome and support being offered to Daniel and his wife Sonja. A group also travelled from Belfast that included the Revd Henry Pedlow, Rector of the Parish of St Donard and his wife Thelma.

Many clerical colleagues from the United Dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross also attended, as did representatives of the Methodist, Evangelical and Roman Catholic churches. Emphasising the presence and nearness of the sea, representatives of the Naval Services, the Naval Reserve, the Association of Ex-Servicemen, the Royal British Legion, the Royal Naval Association, Cobh Harbour Commissioners, Cobh Chamber of Commerce and members of the Cobh Confraternity Band were also present.

As Cllr Stella Meade, Mayor of Cobh and Chairperson of Cobh Town Council, said at the Reception in the Rushbrooke Hotel following the service, "Cobh takes people to its heart, you can be assured of that."

Following the speeches of welcome, Daniel told how he and Sonja had come to Cobh during the summer of 2002 and he had passed the remark that it would be lovely to live in a place like this. And now, here he was! He also paid tribute to the Revd Pedlow for his training in ministerial matters and his help in so many different ways.

He now looks forward to meeting with all his parishioners as pastor and friend and to getting to know the daily life and activities of the Cobh, Glanmire and Little Island communities.

Cork School Of Music - A Spiritual Matter
Even cash-strapped societies are foolish to neglect music
and the arts:
they are crucial to the well-being and soul of any society

Monday 17th March 2003

Speaking at the annual Ecumenical Civic Service for Saint Patrick's Day at Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork, the Right Reverend Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, spoke about the crucial role music and the arts have in fulfilling the well-being of society.

"Music is spiritual," he said. "Music in a whole variety of forms and expressions enriches and gives meaning to our living. In the arts and in beauty we see nothing less than a reflection of God himself who is beauty, and the source of creativity and imagination."

Bishop Colton warned of the dangers of even cash-strapped societies neglecting music and the arts. There is a great danger he said that we

“may become so utilitarian and pragmatic that we make convenient choices in the expedient short-term, and lose sight of our responsibility to cater for the whole of the God-given human person - body, mind and spirit; and so we impoverish the soul of our society.”

Referring to the current uncertainty about the development of the Cork School of Music he said:

“In all of this reflection at an annual Civic Service the future of the development of our Cork School of Music - with over 3700 students, the largest conservatory of music and drama in this country - comes to mind. It's not just the great and famous musicians who have left its tutelage since it was founded in 1878 that are of importance. Equally, if not more significant, is the patient nurturing of music-making and musical appreciation that has been begun and has born fruit in thousands of children and adults whose musicianship is not now heralded but nonetheless infuses lives and society with meaning and creativity.

A way must surely be found to guarantee the proposed development of this crucial facility in our life as a nation.

This is so, not so much because 2005 looms when we will be European Capital of Culture, but because I have tried to show in this brief reflection, music and music-making, and their future in our society, together with all the arts, are crucial for the wholesomeness of our God-given human experience - body, mind and spirit.”

Accidental Fire at Carrigaline Church of Ireland

Bishop expresses sympathy

Saint Mary's Church of Ireland, Carrigaline, Co Cork was badly damaged by an accidental fire which seems to have started at the rear of the organ in the Church tower at breakfast time this Sunday, 23rd March, 2003.

The Bishop of Cork, the Right Reverend Paul Colton, joined the Rector - the Reverend David Armstrong - and the churchwardens at the scene at 09.00 a.m.

Afterwards Bishop Colton said:

"In the midst so much human tragedy at this time as a result of the war in Iraq, an accident like this has to be kept in perspective. No one was injured.

Nonetheless local communities have great attachment to their churches, and I extend my sincere sympathy to the rector and people of Carrigaline parish.

I am also especially grateful to the Fire Service for their professionalism, as well as to the local community who have already shown generous encouragement and support, including Archdeacon Michael O'Brien who has kindly offered the use of his Church (Church of our Lady and St John, Carrigaline) to the Church of Ireland community."

NEW FACILITIES FOR ST MULTOSE NATIONAL SCHOOL, KINSALE

St Multose National School, Kinsale, boasts a view developers would die for; Kinsale harbour in all its beauty. But current pupils are not looking out the window too often nowadays as there are better and newer sights inside, a Library and Computer Room, new books to read, new computers to play with!

This room was formally opened by Bishop Paul Colton on Friday March 7 '03, in the presence Principal Mrs Elizabeth Dorman, Mainstream Teacher Mrs Alice O Riordan, Resource teacher Mrs Penny Brown, Remedial teacher Mrs Carol Martin, members of the Board of Management, parents, friends and, of course, pupils and all present had first attended a lively and meaningful School Assembly directed by Canon David Williams, with Chime ringing conducted by Mrs Roz Williams.

In his opening words the Bishop congratulated all on gaining the new Library/Computer Room and a new Principal's Office and he reminded the children that a school is not merely bricks and mortar, it is what one puts into it that

counts - sharing, play, study. He then cut the red ribbon on the new doors and gave his blessing on the new development.

The engineers for the project were Walsh Design Group, Kinsale, and the builder D and D Construction, Garrettstown.

St Multose is a two- teacher school of 42 pupils and it moved to the present spacious site in 1986. Other subjects taught in the school are French, Singing, playing of Chimes and Recorder. Drama is also part of the curriculum. There is full use of the large Sports Hall on site for indoor games and hockey in winter. Tennis is played on site and swimming takes place at a local pool.

Mr John Stanley, Chairperson of the Board of Management, said these new rooms would enrich the school and bring fun and happiness to pupils. He advised them to develop their reading skills for all sorts of reasons and he also felt the greatest pleasure in life was reading.

Final Act of Worship for St Luke's Church

Sunday March 2 2003 will be a long remembered date for Church of Ireland parishioners of Saint Luke's Union of Parishes, Cork. It marks the final act of worship in St Luke's Church, the closing of the church and a new beginning in the other church of the parish, St Anne's Shandon.

This final Sunday service was in two parts: Thanksgiving for the years of witness of St Luke's Church, and then clergy and congregation moved to Saint Anne's Church Shandon to celebrate the Eucharist and the new future for the parish.

Many past parishioners and well-wishers came to the service and so the church filled with people and music, the music of praise, joy and hopefulness.

In his sermon, Bishop Paul Colton asked the congregation to celebrate the memories of St Luke's, many profound and formative, as these marked out stages in a journey of faith. He continued, " We meet today in a moving symbol of our pilgrimage of faith, and, just as the Children of Israel were asked to be ready

to do in the midst of their Passover meal all those years ago, we will move from this Church to St Anne's taking that step of faith, signalling our trust in the future God has for us, even though we do not fully yet know what that may be."

The Bishop paid tribute to past Rectors of the Parish, especially Canon George Salter, the Reverend Jack Heaslip and current Rector, the Revd Brian O'Rourke who is "giving us the leadership that is so necessary at a difficult time like this, continuing the ministry of pastoral and priest faithfully and dutifully in a way that warrants our support and admiration."

Prior to leaving, the members of the congregation renewed the promises made at baptism as an affirmation of allegiance to God and, following the Blessing, the Bible, the Cross, the Chalice and Paten and the Register of Baptism were then poignantly carried out of the church. Half an hour later these were brought in procession into St Anne's Church, to their new resting place, and the Eucharist was celebrated.

History has now almost come the full circle, as initially Saint Mary's Shandon, was the mother parish. Saint Anne's Shandon was built as a Chapel of Ease of Saint Mary's and in 1738 was given parochial status. Saint Luke's was built in 1837 as a Chapel of Ease of Saint Anne's and it was granted parochial status in 1872. And now Saint Anne's Church is once more the Parish Church. The renowned bells will ring the changes and a new pilgrimage begins.

Installation of the new Dean of Cloyne

On the afternoon of Sunday March 2 '03 the Cathedral Church of St Colman, Cloyne, was bathed in springtime sunshine as the Very Revd Alan Marley was installed as Dean of Cloyne and instituted as Rector of Cloyne Union. The Bishop of Cork Cloyne and Ross, The Right Revd Paul Colton, presided and began by welcoming the many people and clerical colleagues who thronged the historical Cathedral Church to support and pray for the Dean and his family on this very significant occasion.

The sermon was given by the Bishop of Clogher, The Right Revd Michael Jackson who, when Dean of St Fin Barre's Cathedral from 1997 to 2002, worked closely

with Alan Marley on numerous occasions. Bishop Jackson felt that the people of Cloyne must be greatly delighted to have a dean from among the diocesan clergy, "someone who knows the terrain, the expectations, the opportunities and the challenge" and he added,

"As a person you will find him open and warm-hearted, as a pastor you will find him caring and resourceful, as a leader you will find him probing and involved."

Midleton College, long associated with Cloyne Diocese, was the venue for the reception in honour of the Dean. Speeches were given and warm welcomes extended to the Marleys with assurances of support and cooperation in the times ahead. Among those present were David Stanton TD, Canon Bertie Troy, Parish Priest of Midleton, Canon Finbar Kelleher, Parish priest of Cloyne, Representatives of Community Organisations, members of the Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Evangelical churches and some very helpful students.

The Head Girl of Midleton College, Carolyn Smith, almost stole the show as she spoke with such confidence and easy grace of the Dean's special relationship with young people, guaranteeing that the young people of Cloyne would enjoy his energy, enthusiasm and way of enhancing the ordinary.

Bishop Colton paid tribute to the clergy, lay readers and members of the vestry who had kept the parish moving forward so well during the vacancy.

In 1997, glancing through the newspaper The Church Times, Alan Marley read of a vacancy in Fermoy Union in the Republic of Ireland. He applied and before he knew it he and family were on their way. The warm welcome, open friendliness and enthusiastic support offered then by his new parishioners made all the upheaval worthwhile. Now in 2003 a similar reception greeted him from the whole diocese.

January 2003

Calves to the rescue of St Fachtna's Cathedral!

***Conserving the past - Building the future*, the Restoration Project for St Fachtna's Cathedral, Rosscarbery, Co Cork, has now moved on a stage in its development.**

Following the launch of the project in November 2002, an appeal was made to all parishes throughout the Church of Ireland and donations have begun to come in. This support is heartening and much appreciated, especially as so many parishes nowadays are under financial pressure.

The local community has also been busy. Rosscarbery Ladies Group organised a well-supported Gardening Evening with John Hosford of Hosford's Geraniums and Garden Centre, held in the Celtic Ross Hotel, and on January 5 2003 a social run by the Community Council was held. Sincere thanks are due to the Celtic Ross for making its facilities available.

Now another ambitious and exciting fundraising scheme has been devised - **Calf-raising!** In this scheme, when a farmer buys in calves he or she designates one to be a St Fachtna's calf. When this calf is sold, either the full sale price or the profit is passed on to the Restoration Fund. Interested participants from any parish would be more than welcome and a leaflet on the scheme is available from John Jennings 023 48279 or George Maguire 023 48368.

In the past, time and weather have taken their toll on this national monument. The main areas of concern centre on the roof repair (estimated at €180,000) and guttering and drainage that are causing the dampness and deterioration in the fabric of the cathedral. The guttering is to be replaced this month, the drainage system in February/March, and repair to the roof depends on when and what funds are available.

A challenging task lies ahead but, as Dean Chris Peters said at the launch of *Conserving the past - building the Future*, "our goal is not only to conserve this beautiful, historic centre of Christian faith but to enhance its contribution to the whole community so that we can fulfil our mission in today's world."
