

December 2004

Sermon preached by
The Right Reverend Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork
on Christmas Day, 2004
in Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork

"If you're looking for information about Lemony Snicket you are probably ugly."

That's the insult you will read if you rush home this Christmas Day to look up the official Lemony Snicket website to see what on earth I'm talking about.

Have you heard of the mysterious Lemony Snicket? I've no doubt the children have. And adults ought to have. Lemony Snicket - the series of cult children's books that have gripped imaginations worldwide - is pulling people into cinemas all over the world this Christmas.

The film has rocketed to the top of the chart knocking even Harry Potter off his king of the castle place. Even author J.K. Rowling must be worried – she has fought back with a Christmas-time announcement that the next book in her Harry Potter series will be launched on 16th July. Lemony Snicket has pushed the comic superheroes The Incredibles into second and Polar Express into third place.

Lemony Snicket's - A Series of Unfortunate Events - is about three very clever children – Violet, Klaus and Sunny Baudelaire - from a very rich family. Their house burns down. They are orphans – homeless and penniless – who are taken in by a distant relative - Count Olaf. - a comically horrible person who wants to steal the Baudelaire family fortune.

The movie is all about the series of atrocious, ridiculous, and unbelievably depressing things that befall the Baudelaire children. The three children must use every ounce of cunning they possess to foil and refoil the sinister plots of the Count and his group of merry villains.

The ad campaign tied in with the film dares you NOT to go and see the film. If you enjoy happy stories of happy little elves who live in nice little towns and the whole story is so happy it's enough to make you sick, do not, we are told, DO NOT go to see "Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events."

At the start the narrator even tries to put you off. "This is an excellent

opportunity to run out of the theatre, living room or airplane where this film is being shown," he says "It's not too late to see a film about a happy little elf." And midway he says "If you thought now was the time for a happy ending, you were wrong."

The Lemony Snicket story is a deep quest for meaning– a human quest for home and for sanctuary. It is not a once upon a time, happy ever after story. There is more to it. It demands that we enter into the story and come to grips with it. It requires us not reduce it to the level of many clichéd children's stories.

It's a challenge and warning that we would do well to apply to our annual encounter with the Christmas story. We lump that story into a winter wonderland, tarted-up with jaded decorations that appear from the attic only once a year. We sanitize the account of the birth of Jesus with centuries of tinselly gloss and ribbon. We dose it liberally with Victorian sentiment – a 19th century Dickensian, Past-times version of Christmas that catapulted turkeys, puddings, holly and Brussels sprouts to their position of indispensable Christmas prominence. And the result? The radical and incisive Christmas message gets shrouded under a designer chocolate box lid or capped music-box of feel-good warmth.

Yes, our reflection on Christmas so often descends to the level of pious homily and feel-good, pantomime-like Day-Glo upspeak - a story crafted not with the raw reality of the lead pencil but with sparkling gel pens. And this Christmas – not the birth of Jesus – but the Band Aid song Do they know it's Christmas – has been voted by television viewers as the greatest Christmas moment of all time.

The Gospel scholar Geza Vermes asked in yesterday's London Times "what does Christmas signify today if we discard the festive eating, drinking and merrymaking, inherited from the pagan Yule? Who is the real Jesus behind all the pious fiction?"

The Christmas story comes with such a reality check - a warning - a bout of gestalt. Many of us who approach it on the level of the story of the happy little elf are in for quite a shock. It's not just a play scene for the children to dress up – it confronts us with an adult message and a baby who is God among us – the Word made flesh – the light that the darkness has never put out.

That in itself throws down a gauntlet to us. It confronts us with every human emotion: the political ambition and jealousy of Herod, the ruthless murdering of an unscrupulous and oppressive political regime, a young couple who become

refugees and seek asylum. It is about a man who stands alongside his girlfriend who, to all public appearances, has got into trouble, and yet maintains a single-minded purposefulness in the knowledge that she is doing the right thing. It is about emptiness and vulnerability, darkness and anxiety, fear and uncertainty - and yet will you see any of that on the Christmas cards?

More than that, the crib scene is a type of trailer - not so much coming attractions as film censor's guidance for grown ups - that point us ahead to the future episodes in this baby's life. He - this prophet, priest and king - will be executed. His message and way of life will be radical and disturbingly simple - so simple and so radical that we will be uncomfortable. So uncomfortable that, in our humanity, we prefer to entangle that simplicity with our more complicated rationale, our excuses and diversions that we put in place to deflect from the radical simplicity of the message.

This is the baby - God - who shares our humanity and who says to us

- Love God. Love your neighbour
- Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you
- You are the salt of the earth
- Let your light shine
- Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth
- Follow me
- Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth

When I read things like that I realize that we seem to have lost sight of how radical and disturbing a man this baby became. We forget

- that he was a Jewish mystic. Instead but we look for mysticism elsewhere;
- that he was a healer who still offers healing
- that he taught wisdom - a way, a path of life - and we choose other paths - for their novelty and exoticism.
- that he was a social prophet - a voice of religious protest against social, economic and political injustice
- that he founded a movement: a movement which was inclusive and subverted the sharp social boundaries of his day.

And let's be honest, it suits some of us to cut Jesus down to size - it is more comfortable and less demanding that way. Barbara Ehrenreich is an American

writer and activist. In a book about the poor in that country she writes about going to a tent revival meeting in Portland, Maine. The preacher's theme was 'Jesus on the cross' and the importance of believing in him in order to go to heaven. As she listened to him Ehrenreich looked around at the mostly impoverished audience and she thought.

"It would be nice if someone would read this sad-eyed crowd the Sermon on the Mount, accompanied by a rousing commentary on income inequality and the need for a hike in the minimum wage. But Jesus makes his appearance here only as a corpse; the living man, the wine-guzzling vagrant and precocious socialist, is never once mentioned, nor anything he ever had to say. Christ crucified rules, and it may be that the true business of modern Christianity is to crucify him again and again so that he can never get a word out of his mouth." And she concludes; "I got up to leave, timing my exit for when the preacher's metronomic head movements have him looking the other way, and walk out to search for my car, half-expecting to find Jesus out there in the dark, gagged and tethered to a tent pole."

As another writer put it in yesterday's Guardian newspaper:

"The adult Christ who calls his followers to renounce wealth, power and violence is passed over in favour of the gurgling baby and the screaming victim."

It is the story of this Jesus that we are invited to encounter at Christmas – not the story of some baby that we have reduced to some little elf or even some Lemony Snicket, or even more dangerous, as Ehrenreich suggests, a Jesus whose death we acknowledge but who we have tethered to a tent pole so that his words and on-going impact have been forgotten.

The Christmas story draws us as adults then, into unending conversation with the unmistakably challenging words and life of the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. Without such an unending conversation Christmas becomes a festival so empty that it jeers at us.

As we stare at the baby in the manger – as we look at God, the Word made flesh, placed sacramentally in our hands at this communion rail this Christmas, we are invited to become lifelong pilgrims searching for him at the heart of Christianity.

And we will find him, because he has lived for a while among us, we have seen his glory, the glory of the only-begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Following Beckham Baptisms Bishop of Cork criticises inaccurate journalism.

The Bishop of Cork was not in England on 23rd December and did not preside at the Baptism of the Beckham's children.

The Bishop of Cork, Bishop Paul Colton today strongly criticized those sections of the media which indulged in speculation and wrongly concluded that because he had married David and Victoria Beckham in 1999 that he also presided at the baptism of their children on 23rd December.

Bishop Colton said

"It would appear to be the classic case of adding two and two and making five.

This sort of thing is a product of the prurient obsession that many in the media and in society at large have with celebrity families such as David and Victoria Beckham and their children.

The simple fact of the matter is that I did not officiate at this occasion. At the time it was happening I was visiting prior to Christmas those in my diocese who had been bereaved in the previous year.

This sort of inaccurate story writing leaves one wondering where exactly the truth lies generally in news reports such as these.

I also have to wonder now whether those journalists will report their own inaccuracy and untruths with the same alacrity they have devoted to the peddling of this false account of the Christening of the Beckham children."

Christmas Message 2004 from the Bishops of Cork

Our city eagerly awaits the beginning of Cork's significant year as European Capital of Culture for 2005. The year of events and celebrations is frequently spoken of as the purpose of all the upgrades, decorations and renovations in recent times.

But before we launch into 2005, our hearts and minds, our festivities and our lives turn to Christmas—our celebration of the birth of Our Saviour. Here we commemorate the event that fulfils all our expectations.

The Christmas story with its memorable and engaging ingredients has shaped our culture for 2,000 years. The shepherds and angels, the census in Bethlehem, the jealous politicians, an anxious father and a young vulnerable mother, and an extraordinary baby born into poverty — have caught the imagination of humankind.

Artists, writers, musicians, dancers, sculptors, poets, singers and people of all ages have turned to the Christmas story of the incarnation for inspiration.

That event where God set himself among us continues to touch the human heart and spirit. It is the most lasting message of love and hope. It gives meaning and light to all we do.

May the One born in a manger, the Light of the World, be with you and those you love this Christmas. May he give us all hope, joy and peace in 2005.

Most Reverend John Buckley, Bishop of Cork and Ross.

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

November 2004

GRAVITY

Diocesan Youth Council

It was a pleasant surprise to walk into a dimly lit St Fin Barre's Cathedral on the evening of Saturday October 9 and discover 50 -60 young people already present and chatting away quite happily. Surprise number two was that there seemed to be an almost equal amount of boys and girls, all cheerfully waiting for the pull of GRAVITY.

Judy Peters acted as MC for the evening and easily persuaded all present that this was an event worth waiting for. The programme was well structured with lots of songs sandwiched between an ice -breaker, a Reading, an Address, prayers and chat.

A group wielding a variety of musical instruments suddenly materialised from the front pews and began playing. The words of the songs appeared on a well-

positioned screen and, on a signal from the lead singers in the group, every one stood. Row after row of youngsters sang their hearts out, flashy footwear beat out the rhythm, designer- label jeans began bopping and bodies swayed. It was obvious that these young people were enjoying themselves. They were celebrating God and God's world. The adults present could not but follow suit.

Everyone was involved in the ice-breaker that meant writing down the six most important things in one's life and then, guided by Judy Peters, the impermanent things were discarded, leaving a possible three of lasting value. The message hit home.

William Olhausen, new rector of Carrigrohane Union, spoke to the group with honesty and humour. The story of the air gun and shooting at human targets caused a fine ripple of laughter but emphasised the acts of an "empty headed mindless crowd" mentioned in the earlier Reading and also proved that it is not always easy to commit in today's world. However, looking around one felt that those young people present were on their way to commitment and responsibility.

GRAVITY aims to meet once in every two months and the organisers ask for feedback and suggestions.

EVENSONG - The story of a Church of Ireland Country Parish

On the afternoon of Sunday November 7, a large number of people gathered in St George's Church, Mitchelstown for the eagerly awaited Evensong- not the church service, but this was the setting for the launch of Bill Power's book EVENSONG The story of a Church of Ireland Parish, namely the parish of Brigown, County Cork, and written to mark the bicentenary of the building of St George's Church, 1801 -1805.

Speaking on behalf of the Bishop, Archdeacon Bantry White observed that history begins with the place we come from and it is a good sign that so many Church of Ireland parish histories are now being written to add to the historical tapestry of our country. This, he said, makes for better understanding of the wider history we all share.

In launching the book, Senator Martin Mansergh, said it answers a lot of

questions as one ponders on the history of Mitchelstown and there are poignant memories of a "Protestant tide going out". He commended the lists of Baptisms/Births (1775 - 1940) and the recorded Burials (1775 - 2004) as these will be of great help to people in search of their roots. He stressed that the book is "laced with humour" and gave instances that appealed to him and, in conclusion, he advised present day Church of Ireland members to be like their forebears - "go out and act," tackle social problems, accept public duty and make full engagement with the wider community.

EVENSONG The story of a Church of Ireland parish is published by Mount Cashel Books and is in hardback and paperback and printed on gloss paper. Dotted among the chapters are twenty Text panels that add further explanation or information, and over eighty illustrations bring buildings, memorials, people and rectors into our view. Particularly enjoyable is the panel "Birthday present for a barrister" that tells how Rector Thomas Bushe tricked his 21 year old son, later Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, into being responsible for his enormous debts, this rector being "more interested in high living than in his clerical duties" and another chapter tells of Lady Kingston's unorthodox ways of inveigling young Catholic girls in to her orphanage in New Square!

Author Bill Power is both journalist, writer and historian and he has dedicated the book to the memory of Canon Courtenay Moore, Rector of the parish from 1882 - 1916, "in whose footsteps I have curiously followed." For those interested in social history, or for those who too are curious, this book is a must.

October 2004

**Bishop Paul Colton to take part
in European Consortium for Church and State Research.
The Bishop's Paper at the University of Tübingen will be
entitled
"Religion and Law in Dialogue in Ireland"**

The Right Reverend Paul Colton, Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork, has been accorded the honour of being invited to participate in and to present a paper at the annual meeting next week of the European Consortium for Church and State Research www.church-state-europe.org.

The Bishop who, alongside his demanding Episcopal responsibilities, is also currently a part-time LLM (Canon Law) student at Cardiff University will submit his paper - Religion and Law in Dialogue in Ireland – to the meeting which takes place at the University of Tübingen, Germany from 18th November until 21st November.

Bishop Colton said

“I am overwhelmed and excited by this invitation which came to me from the Consortium through Professor Norman Doe at the Centre for Law and Religion www.cf.ac.uk/claws/clr/ at Cardiff University.

The wonderful thing about studying Canon Law is that it affords me the opportunity to bring together the two strands of my studies so far - law and theology – and on this occasion, to present to a gathering of academics, insights, from where, in my work as Bishop in Ireland, academic study encounters practical ministry and public policy.”

The European Consortium for Church and State Research was founded on December 12th 1989, with headquarters at the Istituto di Diritto Internazionale of the University of Milan. The Consortium is composed of a number of professors sharing a common interest in the relations between States and religious denominations in Europe from a historical, political and, particularly, juridical point of view.

New Dean's Vicar installed in St Fin Barre's Cathedral

On Sunday October 24, the Revd Helene Tarneberg Steed of the Church of Sweden was installed as Dean's Vicar in St Fin Barre's Cathedral. She also joins the chaplaincy team in CIT and Cork university Hospital and so it was appropriate that the two scripture readings of the installation service were given by the Roman Catholic member of each of these teams.

In his address, introducing Helene to parishioners, diocesan representatives and the cathedral congregation, Dean Burrows welcomed Helene and Christopher to Cork and pointed out that this is the first time a priest from Sweden has been appointed to a Church of Ireland parish. He also said, "We are sure Helene will

bring much wisdom and many refreshing insights to the cathedral and to the wider diocese.

For the past eight years Helene has been a team vicar in a parish near Gothenburg, Diocese of Skara. Of her new ministry Helene says, "I am very excited about this appointment. I look forward to the challenge and my husband and I are excited about living in Ireland. It is such a beautiful country. I have been working in a more rural setting for the past number of years, so the change is good."

**BISHOP PAUL COLTON TO SPEAK
AT 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF
BERKELEY DIVINITY SCHOOL AT YALE.
21ST CENTURY BISHOP FOLLOWS IN STEPS OF HIS 18TH
CENTURY PREDECESSOR**

7th October 2004

The Right Reverend Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross will follow in the steps of his Eighteenth Century predecessor - the philosopher George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne – when he travels to the United States of America for the 150th Anniversary celebrations of the Berkeley Divinity School at Yale.

Bishop Colton will speak at a dinner on Wednesday 13th October to mark the anniversary.

Berkeley Divinity School at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut was founded in 1854 and named after the Eighteenth Century Bishop of Cloyne – George Berkeley – who had travelled to America in 1728 with the intention of founding a seminary to mediate the Anglican tradition in new surroundings. A promised grant of £20,000 from the government of the day never materialised and Berkeley's dream was unfulfilled.

Berkeley donated his farm in Newport, Rhode Island and library of Theological Books to Yale in 1733 which had only been founded in 1701.

From 1734 to 1752 Berkeley was Anglican Bishop of Cloyne.

Bishop Colton said

“The dream Bishop Berkeley had of founding a seminary in America may have been unfulfilled in his lifetime; but through the work of the Berkeley Divinity School at Yale whose 150th anniversary we are celebrating this year, through Berkeley’s generosity to Yale and indeed, through Berkeley (The University of California) the momentous efforts made by Berkeley were recognised by later generations and are acknowledged by us today: his influence continues. That is worth celebrating.”

September 2004

Douglas Union Fashion Show

Over 700 people thronged into the Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork, on September 28 to attend the Fashion Show run to raise funds for the Canon Packham Hall Renovation Project and for Marymount Hospice, Cork. A hardworking committee, spearheaded by Ann Teap and Hilda Beamish, put together an exciting evening of fashion and designs from outlets such as Hush of Wintrop Arcade, Wish of Mount Oval village, Chanell, East Douglas village, Mango of Patrick Street and Clara of East Douglas village and using both professional models and volunteers from Douglas Union.

Howard Dunne of the organising committee welcomed all to the show, highlighting the valuable sponsorship given to the event and without which staging such a show would be impossible.

Claire Cullinane was compère for the evening and children from St Luke's School, Douglas were the first to prance down the catwalk, wearing trendy gear from Mischief Makers and displaying such confidence that Kate Moss and Co had better watch their backs! Welch Sports also made use of young and sporty models and hockey playing males like Stephen Deane, Derek Hales and Stephen Teap drew gasps of admiration, as did their designer sports clothes.

When clothes from High Society, Middleton, appeared, once again some of the models looked familiar: Joy Saville, Het Ross, Hilda Hosford and Elizabeth

Shannon and they made it clear that going-to-church fashions will soon change!

In the second half of the show, parish males were given their chance to shine with casual styles and formal wear from Fitzgerald's Menswear. Cheers rang out for Arthur Sweetnam, Sam Beamish, John Packham, Stephen Daunt, Brian Espey, Brian Chambers, Glenn Hanna, Alistair Dunne and their 'lovely accessory', Máire Roycroft, Principal of St Luke's School, Douglas, who kept them in line.

From this entertaining evening a profit of €21,145 was achieved and congratulations must go to all who organised and helped with the evening. Recently, organising representatives, Howard Dunne and Ann Teap, and Rector Adrian Wilkinson met with Ann Ellard, representing Friends of Marymount Home Care Team, and the donation to Marymount was handed over.

August 2004

New Rector for Carrigrohane Union

St Peter's Church, Carrigrohane is a gem with its historical roots dating back to 1291. This small church was packed to capacity on Sunday afternoon, August 29, as clergy, lay readers, Representatives of other Churches, parishioners, friends and a host of children of all ages gathered for the Institution of the new Rector of Carrigrohane Union, the Revd William Paul Olhausen. The Bishop began the ceremony by welcoming William, his wife Anne and children Rachel, Charlotte and Fiona who have made a great change to their lives in coming to County Cork from a Cambridge city parish.

The Preacher, the Revd Dr Paul Weston who is Tutor in Missiology and Homiletics at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, delivered a highly entertaining sermon that also contained a sincere and real message - the value of humility - "In God's kingdom, remember who you are."

Also participating in the service were parishioners of Carrigrohane Union: Douglas Vance, Fiona Giles, Nigel Martin, Ruth Hockey, Ted Rea, George Quinn, Gordon Lightbody and Olga Dooley.

After the service, delicious food awaited all in the Parish Hall and speeches of

welcome were given by the Bishop, the Revd John Faris of the Presbyterian Church, and Churchwarden Ivan Mc Mahon. The final word was allowed to the Rector who thanked parishioners for the warm hospitality afforded to him and to his family in the five weeks that they have been in County Cork. "We have been called to this place," he said, "and what we are about is building God's kingdom and finding our place in that kingdom. I so look forward to that adventure."

June 2004

Diocesan Synod 2004

Skibbereen, June 12

In spite of post-election excitement and good weather 129 Synod representatives gathered in the West Cork Hotel, Skibbereen, for this year's Diocesan Synod. The meeting was preceded by a Celebration of Holy Communion in Abbeystrewry Church, followed by morning coffee and greetings in the hotel and, as always, it began on time. Newest Rector, Revd Bruce Hayes, (Abbeystrewry Union) gave the scripture reading and prayers and we remembered especially the Diocesan Secretary who was unable to attend owing to a sudden death in the family.

The presence of a quorum was obvious and Mr Lyndon Mac Cann SC was nominated as Assessor. Mrs Ann Buttimer (Diocesan Council) listed the reports presented and elections took place: Mr John Stanley (Kinsale Union) was elected as Lay Member of the RCB, Mr Fred Treacy (Diocesan Council) as Diocesan Treasurer, Mrs Anne Hunt and Dr Anne Caird as Lay Members of the Diocesan Healing and Pastoral Care Committee.

The Bishop's Presidential Address is always worth waiting for and this year proved no exception. (The speech in full follows this report)

Following the Address, the Synod suspended Standing Orders and Canon JLB Deane (General Licence) presented his paper on the Census of Population 2002. The Paper compared the C of I population changes that have occurred between the 1991 census and that of 2002. There are, he felt, questions to be addressed: Why have great changes in C of I numbers happened in places like Kanturk (+ 295.8%), Millstreet (+284.6%) and Youghal area (+ 112.4%) and more? Can the figures be right, he asked? What causes the large range of difference between the

civil census and the Church census? Because of these differences, Canon Deane feels there is an urgent need to reassess the assessment procedure, taking both 'disappearing' and 'multiplying' people into account.

In the discussion of matters raised in the Presidential Address, Mr Brian Cairns (Cloyne Union) considered it a positive and encouraging address and proved that the Church militant is not in retreat. He hoped the Bishop was also encouraged by lay and clerical support. Mr Richard Dring (Carrigaline Union) pointed out that the 215 people mentioned as being in Youth Work were mainly involved in Sunday School Ministry and so there was a crying need to reach the older youth, those confirmed and other teenagers. As 60% of our numbers are under 40 years old, he wondered whether church congregations matched this. The Revd Eithne Lynch (Kilmoe Union), in her inimitable, succinct way reached the podium and said, "Bishop, well done!" and, referring to the Diocesan Launch of the BCP 2004, Ann Buttimer encouraged everyone to use the book daily because "if we did more praying and less grumbling we would have a better diocese."

At this juncture, invited guests - Revd Fr Kevin O Reagan (Baltimore), Mr John Faris of the Presbyterian Church and Mr Roy Kingston, representing the Methodist Church, were presented with a copy of the new Prayer Book. Still on the BCP, Canon David Williams appealed for a recovery of the silences in services as stated in the BCP while, regarding youth work, Cecil Poole (Carrigaline Union) recommended that the experience of parents whose children had now grown up be tapped.

Communications from General Synod were passed on by the Archdeacon and Mr David Bird (Cobh and Glanmire Union) delivered an astute analysis and personal observations on General Synod 2004. His final observation was that General Synod could improve on content and presentation.

Lunch at Synod is always a joyful event and gives everyone a chance to 'network', meet old and new friends and to reflect on the first part of the day.

The Revd Daniel Nuzum (Templebreedy Group) reopened proceedings by proposing the Report of Diocesan Council. He listed the many Diocesan activities mentioned, from the Bishop's Course in Pastoral Work to the appointment of a Diocesan Education officer, to prove the enormous amount of human contact that happens in the diocese and "happens so naturally it is not newsworthy" but over

all this gives an encouraging sense of hope, expectancy and excitement for the future of the diocese. Four people spoke to the report; the Dean of Cork (twice), Mr John Stanley, Mrs Ann Buttimer and Mr George Stoney. St Fin Barre's Union, listed on page four, produced an eloquent, fast-flowing speech from the Dean of Cork on the "Mother of Mother Churches". He thanked Diocesan Council for the increased assessment allowance for the cathedral, praised all who attended the

Launch of the BCP, plus the clerical support for same, and issued a cordial invitation to all to return to the cathedral to hear Bishop Richard Holloway's Public Lecture on June 19. He requested that 1926 Psalters lying in church or cupboard be donated to St Fin Barre's for psalm singing and also told of vacancies in Lapp's Court, should anyone in the diocese be interested. It is also worth noting the Dean's later 'brief remark', as this was a serious plea that we as a diocese be in solidarity with the sentiments of the Bishops' Appeal. Money is important if the appeal is to continue to do good. Mr John Stanley suggested that the method of

Parish Assessment be changed as the system militates against many of the missing number of people. He feels that, for 5 - 10 years, the assessment should be capped and then increased by a percentage. Relating costs to heads is unfair, he thinks.

Next came the Report of the Diocesan Board of Education, proposed by Revd Brian O Rourke (St Anne's Union, Shandon) who drew our attention to the fact that 11% of those in the diocese are in Primary education. He welcomed the fact that Boards of Management are now in place for four years (not three) and also the importance of training for Board members. In seconding the report, Mr Alwyn

Williams (Diocesan Council) mentioned the plethora of reports, Acts and other educational documents that have been published recently. These changes in and demands of current legislation superimpose a huge work- load on school boards, management and patrons. He therefore suggested utilising the range of

professionalism that exists in the diocese to establish an educational group to assist the Bishop, thus freeing him to deal with his ecclesiastical and pastoral duties and also for the benefit of Management Boards at Primary and Secondary

level. Mr Bill Perrott (Douglas Union) wondered why it should take 23 people to sit on a trustee board (The DBE) for merely four times a year and so was disappointed at the lack of desire to change the constitution of the Diocesan Board of Education. The Archdeacon explained that, being tied to Scheme 66

under the Educational Endowments Act 1885, it would be very costly and complicated to change the constitution. However, the State is now undertaking a review of pre- 1922 legislation and in a year's time the position should be clearer.

Mr Brian Cairns stressed the financial difficulties for some parents, not only for fees but clothing, food, and books and he stressed that anyone facing such difficulty should speak to the Rector of the parish as well as the Principal of the school. Mr Sandy Blackley (Fermoy Union) felt it important that the Board of Education should make career guidance teachers in Secondary schools aware of the opportunities, support and social rewards of Primary teaching. He was also unhappy with non Church of Ireland teachers teaching in Church of Ireland schools and the necessity that these teachers be sympathetic to the ethos of such schools. Revd Daniel Nuzum pointed out that one reason for the decline in principals is because of the underlying suggestion that they run parish activities and Canon Deane said that the reason there are large numbers of unqualified teachers in Primary schools in the country is because of the scarcity of qualified Primary school teachers, full stop. Revd Peter Hanna mentioned that our Primary schools provide valuable outreach to the wider community. The Report was adopted and the strong views expressed in the debate prove that education is taken very seriously in the diocese

Mrs Judy Peters (Ross Union) was pleased to give the first Report of the Diocesan Youth Council, membership of which spans the whole diocese. Most parishes cater for Primary school children with Sunday schools and holiday clubs but there are no C of I youth camps run for the post confirmation age. She appealed for feedback on area activities and other Christian group activities as teenagers are not always keen to attend only C of I events. The DYC hopes to raise its profile so that young people will know exactly what the DCY is. Revd Daniel Owen (Cobh and Glanmire Union) seconded the report and Revd Adrian Wilkinson made a valuable suggestion that clergy have information on DYC events and activities as part of their confirmation package. Robin Newenham (General Licence) congratulated the Council and the Report was then adopted.

The Dean of Cloyne proposed the Report of the Diocesan Church in Society Committee and stressed that, as well as undertaking certain projects, the committee is a resource that can coordinate other work that is also being done in both diocese and community. There is a need to collaborate more with other bodies and other religious persuasions to sharpen the diocesan profile. Revd Brian O'Rourke seconded the Report. Referring to collaboration, Mrs Sandra Dukelow (Kilmocomogue Union) outlined some of the collaborated efforts being undertaken by the Mothers' Union and the changing roles of committees that helped avoid replication. The report was then adopted.

The final report of the day, the Report of the Diocesan Council for Mission, was proposed by Mrs Mary Dukelow (Diocesan Council) who gave a clear summary of the report, stressing involvement, issues of worship, evangelism and the importance of 'theologising the laity'. Revd Ian Jonas, (Kilgarriffe Union) seconded the Report and suggested that the DCM and Church in Society swap minutes to link the issue of mission and love with societal issues. Mrs Olive Buckley (Mallow Union) was the only speaker to this report and she regretted the lack of response to speak and also challenged us all to stop keeping our mouths shut, saying, "We have a Gospel to proclaim." The report was adopted.

The day had been long and hot but in summation the Bishop hoped that the encouraging things said would take root when they were brought home to parishes.

**Diocesan Synod Address given in Skibbereen, Co. Cork
by The Right Rev. Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and
Ross
12th June 2004**

Introduction

Dear friends in Christ, we meet in his name, as the pilgrim people of God, to do the work of his Church in this Diocesan Synod of Cork, Cloyne and Ross – my sixth as Bishop!

This will be the last session of this Diocesan Synod in this triennium, and so I thank you for your voluntary commitment as Synod members throughout this period.

Remarkable Generosity – Thank you

As we begin our work today I wish to highlight the generosity of commitment of two members. Last month Canon JLB Deane completed 50 uninterrupted years as a member of Diocesan Council. Like Mr George Stoney he has completed it – not, we hope, as an endurance test – but as an act of self-offering and lay ministry in the Church. Likewise, The O'Donovan recently retired as Diocesan Treasurer and as a co-opted member of the Representative Church Body. We thank him for all

his generous offering of time and ability for the work of Christ's Church. At the end of this address it will be my pleasure to make a presentation to each of them, but I know you would wish to thank and salute them.

Deployment – Changes, Welcome and Farewell

Also as we begin our Synod, I congratulate those who, in the last year, have new appointments in the Diocese; those who are new among us in the ordained ministry, and I thank those to whom we have said farewell:

- the Reverend Andrew McCroskery was appointed to Youghal Union
- the Reverend Hazel Minion was ordained deacon
- the Reverend Stella Mikhail and the Reverend Joy Ferguson were ordained priest
- the Reverend Catherine Snyder Gibson has begun Ministry in Fermoy Union
- the Reverend Bruce Hayes is the new incumbent here in Abbeystrewry
- in August we look forward to welcoming the Reverend William Olhausen to Carrigrohane Union; and in October the Reverend Helene Tarneberg Steed will come from Sweden to the position of Dean's Vicar at St Fin Barre's Cathedral;
- as anticipated at last year's Synod we said farewell to the Very Rev. Trevor Lester who headed to Waterford as Dean
- to the Reverend Sue Watterson who is in Dublin heading up the Church's ministry of healing
- and in February the Reverend Francis Rutledge left to go to the Diocese of Clogher
- we thank them and say Good Bye – God bless.

R.I.P.

In sympathising with all who were bereaved since we last met year also we were saddened by the deaths of fellow pilgrims, and today I mention former members of this Synod:

- Mrs Olive Walls who also served on Diocesan Council and was noted for selfless involvement in the Skiddys' Charity.
- Canon Jerram Burrows who served the bulk of his ministry in this Diocese as Headmaster of the Cork Grammar School.
- The Venerable Brian Snow who was only here a short time, but served his first curacy in Christ Church.
- Most recently the Reverend John Haworth, whose vocation was nurtured in the Christ Church context, served in many parts of the Church of Ireland; in this diocese in Kinneigh and in Fermoy and who, in retirement, volunteered his

ministry generously and selflessly, travelling great distances, in order to sustain ministry where it would not otherwise have been sustained.

We offer our sincere sympathy to all their families, particularly to Rose Haworth in the midst of such recent bereavement.

The Familial Diocese

I make these personal remarks at the outset this year to emphasise and draw attention to our sense of ourselves as a familial diocese. We are like a family. That is what a diocese ought to be.

The Diocese

Broadly speaking a diocese is a territory under the spiritual leadership and oversight of a bishop and governed by a representative assembly – in our case, the Diocesan Synod, itself governed provincially by the General Synod. It is an established principle of both Anglican theology and Anglican Law that when we speak of the local Church we are referring not to the parish (as some have come to think), but rather the diocese.

As Anglicanism unfolds through its current controversies, we will, I believe, become increasingly conscious of this fundamental point. I believe before too long I will be reminding you that I have made this point; and the outworking of it will become ever more obvious and relevant.

Having said that, technical descriptions do little justice to the human reality of interdependence and mutual regard we experience here in Cork, Cloyne and Ross. This is a family. We should not take that for granted. Like all good relationships it is something that requires work. What do we build on?

- our faithful pilgrimage in community with God the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- our opting in to the Church of Ireland as a framework for belonging and expression of that belief
- mutual understanding
- respect for diversity of opinion
- loyalty
- and openness

We also have to cultivate the maturity that enables us to know how to live with difference: difference in believing; in belonging; in lifestyle; in expression; in choices made and principles held. When someone says to me "This is a principle for me," I say to them "Go gently; the person you say that to has principles as well." In the area of belief this can be uncomfortable, but it is an inevitable part of the dialectic that goes with community life, especially within an inclusive faith community such as Anglicanism

In his book - *Counting People In* - Richard Thomas (Director of Communications for the Diocese of Oxford) sets parameters for what I am trying to articulate:

"So does it matter what you believe?" he asks. "Absolutely. The search for truth is at the heart of the gospel. And will anything do? No. Clearly the search for truth takes us on a pilgrimage of faith, where the search for an authentic experience of the divine mystery leads us to exclude false, misleading or just plain bad religious understanding and practice. Faith is not an irrational acceptance of the illogical or impossible. It is, at heart, a way,...of making sense of reality because reality, for the Christian is truth, and truth reveals God's creative, forgiving energy and love. Thus the search for reality, for truth, for authenticity, is an important test of a genuine religious pilgrimage. Christians should not be afraid of the enquiring mind: we should celebrate it, even when the search takes us into uncomfortable territory...The ability to live with those who disagree with you has at least as much to do with your level of emotional maturity as it does your spiritual maturity; in fact the two may be closely linked."

Census 2002

Counting People In was an opportune "read" for two reasons. First, the results of Census 2002: I tread carefully when it comes to statistics, mindful of Paul Brodeur's counsel

"Statistics are human beings with the tears wiped off"

I believe we can make some fundamental statements about religion in Ireland on foot of Census 2002:

- Religion - albeit in many guises - is still important to the people of Ireland.
- Christianity, expressed in many ways, is still hugely significant.
- The expression of Christianity is more diverse, more varied than we have ever

known before in Ireland.

- The number of people not espousing religion has increased hugely, to the point of being the second largest grouping in this section of the Census.
- While that is significant it ought not to be overplayed, because at the same time all but one Christian denomination grew in numbers, some very significantly; the single largest percentage increase, albeit on a small starting number, being among Orthodox Christians.
- So, for many churches such as ours, probably because of net migration, we are coming to terms with a surprise: increased numbers, in the Church of Ireland's case by over one-fifth.

For us locally, we are told of an additional 5000 people we didn't know about, so that presents local responsibilities. Which brings me to my second reason for valuing Richard Thomas' book: Canon JLB Deane has painstakingly prepared a paper for us providing local analysis which has been circulated to you. What can we infer from it? He will give us some specific insights from his study. For my part I ask some general questions:

How are we to include and welcome these people? What changes do we need to make within our churches and as and between the now established ecumenical relationships between our churches to draw them in? What are our relationships with new groups of Christians and new churches in Ireland?

I have a very graphic illustration of this recently when representatives of the sizeable Orthodox community now living in Cork came to The Palace on a courtesy call. Sadly within two weeks I was worshipping with them at the funeral of a young Russian student at Ashton School who had died in a car crash.

Most important, arising from the census: who are these people and where are they?

Why are there such gaps between the Census 2002 figures and the parochial census figures?

Let me suggest a reason – it's something I have been harping on about for years: we take a too narrow view of who belongs. In spite of our clichés about evangelism; and our assertion that we are inclusive; and our syntax about outreach we still have what Richard Thomas calls a "participant" model of

membership.

Participants are those who belong by participating in the organized life of a church. We recognise them readily because we see them; they sign up; they pay in; they help out. "There are those who may not come, even irregularly, to worship. They will not be found on lists...But if asked, they will state quite firmly that they belong." These are associates.

'Participating' Christians are far outnumbered by 'associates'; those seldom if ever attending church, but claiming allegiance – who belong by believing. Thomas looks at ways the church can advance their pilgrimage, helping them understand the faith they hold, and guiding their spirituality. The medieval parish system isn't tuned, he points out, to the modern culture of mobility, independence, literacy and communication technology.

A key question for us has to be how are we to minister to such people? How does the church communicate with those who have a belief in God but who do not find the Church an essential part of that belief?

When we articulate this theology of belonging we need to work it out not only in terms of narrowly defined membership of the Church, but against the yardstick of the incarnation which draws us beyond the church into the community in which the Church is set, embracing the most fundamental of all Christian doctrines, that of creation itself.

Confusing Times

These perspectives challenge us greatly and may even make us hugely uncomfortable. Living through a cusp era, such as this one, rapidly changing,

Last month the results of Behaviour and Attitudes Marketing Research were presented under the heading "High Anxiety: Keeping up with the Jones in Modern Ireland." Some of the outcomes were hugely interesting and I am grateful Hugh St Leger, Marketing Manager of Statoil Ireland (a son of this diocese) for this information:

:: The general thesis of the paper is that, while Irish people are increasingly better off they are not necessarily happier or more content and also.

:: That they are finding new things to believe in.

A key conclusion was that we as people are seeking new things to believe in.

Moving forward

In this sort of scenario we are coming to terms with the sort of Christianity exemplified in the European Values Studies undertaken as recently as 2000 and articulated in the catch phrase coined by Grace Davie sociologist of religion: "believing without belonging."

There is a measure of uncomfortable (ideological) chaos and fear, pessimism even, about the times in which we live. This presents dangers and attractive traps that some, I believe are falling into. At this juncture they will do nothing, in the longer term view, for our mission and calling. I speak of

- a new and vigorous fundamentalism: a retreat to a literalism that not only tries to fly in the face of rationalism; but also castrates the sense of mystery that is such an inescapable part of existence, by peddling a cheap certainty;
- Also, I speak of a neo-McCarthyism which instead of being a red scare, tries to disarm diversity of opinion and practice in favour of standardisation. It's a type of neo-totalitarianism that tends towards crossing the boundary between the public and the private in people's lives; interfering in private concerns in order, supposedly to attain a perfection ecclesial society.

This is an old Fourth Century heresy in a new guise: donatism – the suggestion that only those living a blameless life may belong in the church; and, therefore, in the case of clergy, that the validity of any sacrament depends upon the personal worthiness of the priest administering it.

These insidious trends in some sections of the Church will do nothing to meet the evangelistic challenges of our time.

What sort of Church?

That being the case what sort of Church do we need? I've already said that we need to move beyond our participant model of membership. For more insight I turn paradoxically to the world of the secular detective novel – those of Alexander McCall Smith – currently on the top sellers' lists in the bookshops in great numbers of titles. In the opening pages of his first - The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency we read of the lady detective Mma Ramotswe:

“She was a good detective, and a good woman. A good woman in a good country, one might say. She loved her county....I love all the people whom God made, but I especially know how to love the people who live in this place. They are my people, my brothers and sisters. It is my duty to help them to solve the mysteries in their lives. That is what I am called to do....”

The impulses of incarnational ministry are here: being; being in a particular place; knowing that place; loving that place; loving the people of that place; viewing them as brothers and sisters; the sense of duty and calling – and above all the living with mystery: journeying together in pursuit of truth within mystery.

The Best-Run Launderette

The London-based priest, writer and broadcaster Eric James, in a sermon told of his late friend - Clem Mitford - who owned a chain of launderettes and who said to him one day “You know, whatever else we do at this Church, we must run it like the best-run launderette. The world must know where it is, what it’s for, and when it’s open.”

Parishes of this diocese could do a lot worse as part of their strategising than scrutinise themselves under these headings

- Where it is: Can people find you? Do you try to get them to find you? Do you assume everyone knows the way? (If I as bishops can’t find you what hope is there for total strangers?)
- What it’s for? Have we a sense of priorities. Worked out prayerfully, thoughtfully and purposefully? Have we a sense of what we are doing and to what end?
- When it’s open: are those notice boards up to date? Are our service schedules intelligible, instinctive and predictable? I believe we are not served well by schedules which look like matrices on a Leaving certificate maths paper offering permutations, variations and unpredictable sequences. We arrange to watch certain television programmes for example because we always know what time they are at and on what channel.

Last year - looking ahead – six things:

Last year, towards the conclusion of my address I said “The year ahead will be busy. Certainly I can see six major things on the agenda”

- Safeguarding Trust

- The Hard Gospel
- European Capital of Culture, 2005
- The new Book of Common Prayer
- Human Sexuality.
- reflection on ministry

And indeed that was the case.

Safeguarding Trust

In the case of Safeguarding Trust, its re-introduction in the Diocese will be completed next week with the issuing to Select Vestries of training certificates in respect of youth workers and panel members. Prior to that, starting last summer,

- the legal basis of the Code of Good practice was clarified;
 - a training team was recruited and trained: Christine Hilliard, Tom Cremin and Hilda Beamish; we are grateful to them and especially to Ann Hevers who took Hilda's place when the need arose;
 - most of the clergy have now had revision training;
 - new panel members were trained;
 - 215 youth workers in the Diocese, nominated by the parishes, were trained.
- Four training sessions were held last month.

What is most important in this area is that the policy and good practice articulated on paper are lifted out of the text and implemented in the life of the parishes and diocese.

The Hard Gospel

Last November a special regional synod was held to respond to the report on sectarianism – The Hard Gospel. This process continues in the Church of Ireland. It has not been completed, and there is plenty of scope for the agenda the group have set. For my part my concern, based on my overview of the Diocese continues to be that we tend to see this as an issue only appropriate to other people in other places. As I said on the day, at its nub it is about how we handle the free expression of difference; how, as the sub-title of the report challenges, we deal positively with that difference. The challenging question for each of us is - do I see in others around me, especially those different from me, a reflection of God's glory? – A question which integrates, I believe, both with the current

debates in our church and with that neo-quasi-totalitarianism to which I have already referred.

The Book of Common Prayer

Throughout the last nine months we have been gearing up for the arrival in our pews last Sunday of the new Book of Common Prayer.

- Central Liturgical Officer (Canon R Rountree)
- Diocesan Liturgical Officer (Dean M Burrows)
- Diocesan Programme of Preparation
- :: Pastoral Letter and Posters
- :: Diocesan Magazine Articles and Website
- :: Diocesan Prayer
- :: Diocesan Council briefing
- :: Ordering the books!
- :: Taster/Introductory liturgies
- :: Training for clergy and Diocesan Readers
- :: Rural Deanery Visits

Our next phase will be our Training for Difference phase

- The Psalter
- Holy Baptism
- Enriching the contemporary language Eucharist
- Rediscovering the traditional language Eucharist
- Service of the Word

Again it's about lifting words out of books and making them live: live in the worship and spirituality of our lives as Christians and in our churches.

European Capital of Culture, 2005

I myself and clergy of the city parishes have been having conversations in relation to the European Capital of Culture with the organisers concerned. Much more remains to be done in this sphere by us and together with our ecumenical partners in relation to this endeavour. Just as the Churches of Manchester were involved in the Commonwealth Games; and those of Athens are preparing for the Olympics this summer, the churches of Cork, should I believe engage with this opportunity in 2005.

Human Sexuality

In the past year, as anticipated, the debate about human sexuality catapulted Anglicanism onto the media agenda worldwide. As I indicated would happen, the Bishops did issue their Pastoral Letter on Human Sexuality last year; and currently have initiated a process of consultation and receiving of submissions from interested parties. For my part, in a widely publicised sermon on Christmas Day 2003 I have already indicated my personal views on this subject.

On the international front, the Archbishop of Canterbury established the Lambeth Commission which is being chaired by our own Archbishop of Armagh, not to examine the issue of human sexuality per se, but to study the nature of our communion as an Anglican family and how that works. We will be hearing much more about this in the year to come when, as the debate continues, very challenging times will be testing. It is to be deplored that in Anglican churches all over the world, some are at work sowing the seeds of the idea of institutionalising split and division in church structures.

Reflection on Ministry

Our Diocesan Day of Reflection on Ministry last September, facilitated by the Reverend Chris Webb, Renewal Officer of the Council for Mission and Ministry in the Church in Wales, proved stimulating and dovetailed with a similar process of reflection nationally. The Ministry Advisory Group in the Diocese and the Diocesan Council both received Chris Webb's reflections, and considerable thought has been given, though it has to be said, without agreement because of financial constraints, to how we communicate most effectively to the participants and more widely the outcomes of the day.

People often ask what such occasions achieve. In this instance

- it served as an encouragement that many of the small steps we are already taking are significant ones in the right direction
- it underscored the emphasis on lay ministry and
- as the Diocese moved forward in its work, I believe, it has channelled us forward in three new enterprises:
 1. the post of Diocesan Education Officer – currently advertised;
 2. the moving forward with the Bishop's Course in Pastoral Work for which start-up funding has been received from the Priorities' Fund; and
 3. a review, currently under way, of the potential for a part-time youth worker in

the Diocese.

Even if these were the only tangible outcomes they would be worthwhile in themselves.

Last year I referred at length to the large numbers of people and their wide range of involvement in lay ministries of all sorts in the Diocese. The day of reflection on ministry set me thinking from my overview position as to what we have been doing and have done more recently in the field of ministry. Looking at them under a number of headings I realise that for a small part of the Church we are often too hard on ourselves about what we are achieving with very limited resources. An incomplete list identified from my perspective of overview which I outline for you in order to encourage you includes:

Faith Development

- the Bishop's Course in Theology (a second group are about to graduate)
- Millennium revision of Diocesan Cycle of Prayer
- Millennium Prayer and BCP 2004 Prayer
- Daily Prayer cards
- Two Lent courses
- Post of Diocesan Education Officer advertised
- Provision of seasonal liturgies for use in the parishes
- Inter-faith day and consultation
- The Wreath of Life – spirituality in Sweden

Children's and Youth Ministry

- Review of Youth Work
- Reordering of arrangements for Confirmation
- Y Bother event for the newly confirmed
- Millennium visit of Roly the Clown
- New Diocesan Youth Council
- Introduction of Follow Me in the primary schools
- Reintroduction of Safeguarding Trust
- Training seminars for teachers and school Boards of Management
- Appointment of whole-time Chaplain at UCC
- Almost three hundred people involved in youth work
- Our on-going commitment to and involvement in ICICYMA - Garryduff

Communication and Outreach

- New framework for part-time DCO set up
- Raising the Church's profile in the local media
- Reworking of the Coat of Arms for modern usage
- Diocesan website set up and webmaster appointed
- Information leaflet newly formatted

Diocesan Development

- Episcopal Visitation 2001 – where are we as a Diocese?
- Parish study questions relating to the Episcopal Visitation
- Review of Diocesan Synod
- Study under way concerning relocation of Diocesan Office

Pastoral Ministry

- New Diocesan Healing and Pastoral Care Committee about to begin its work
- Lay visitors
- Mini CPE
- Hospital Chaplains' Training
- In-Service training for clergy
- Training scheme for lay ministers of the Eucharist

The Elderly

- Saint Luke's Home
- Lapps' Court and Lapps' Charity
- Kingston College

Support for the Ministry

- Diocesan Information and Resource Pack
- Policy development
- :: Parish Readers
- :: Lay assistants at the Eucharist
- :: Holy Communion by Extension
- Funding for Continuing Ministerial Education
- Clergy Conferences:
- :: Preaching
- :: Rural Ministry
- :: Liturgy
- :: Ministry Today

- Training Days
- :: Tax
- :: Suicide and Para-suicide
- :: Liturgy
- :: Interfaith dialogue
- :: Marriage counselling
- :: Children and Communion
- Funding of attending training events e.g. Céiliúradh; Hospital Chaplains' Courses
- Computer training courses – introductory and advanced – for clergy and lay people
- Review of policy on Sabbatical Leave for Clergy
- Introduction of formalised provision for Clergy Retreat and Study week
- Provision of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland to all clergy
- Provision of reading and study material for clergy and lay readers
- Specific information resources prepared on
 - :: Marriage Law
 - :: Copyright
 - :: Data Protection
- Advisory guidelines from Diocesan Council to Select Vestries concerning administrative backup for clergy
- Diocesan Policy on CME and on Ministerial Review

On-going Challenges

Even with a long list like this the sense of what more remains to be done is overwhelming. Let us work collaboratively step by step with patience and steadfastness, supporting one another and building one another up as the people of God.

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 all who in ordained ministry take on additional roles – my three Domestic Chaplains; my Examining Chaplain; the Rural Deans, the Diocesan Director of Ordinands, the Warden of Readers the Reverend Robert Kingston who has now stepped down from that position; to the Archdeacon; our Diocesan Communications Officer; 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 and our Diocesan Secretary, Wilfred Baker.

Thank you to each and every one of you for all that you do not least all of our volunteers.

Now let us turn to the business of our Synod for the good of Christ and part of his Church here in Cork, Cloyne and Ross.

+Paul Cork

12th June, 2004

Pastoral visit of the Bishop to the community, parish and institutions in Great Island, Cork Harbour

On Tuesday, June 1 2004, the Bishop paid a pastoral visit to the community, parish and institutions on Great Island, Cork Harbour. He was accompanied by the Revd Daniel Owen, Rector of Cobh and Glanmire Union, and Mr David Bird, organiser of the day's activities.

His first call was to meet and talk with Cllr Terry Anderson, Mayor of Cobh, and other councillors at the Town Hall and then to Cobh Chamber of Commerce to be welcomed by President Michael Mc Cormack and Chief Executive Kathleen Geary.

In honour of this visit he was presented with a print of Cobh, seen from the water.

The nearby Sirius Art Centre was next where administer Peggy Sue Amison gave the Bishop a CD on the Centre.

Then it was up the hill to Cobh Community Care at Park Road Centre and, guided by Chairperson Nan Nestor and Sister Eleanor Hennessey, the Bishop met all those attending the Day Centre as they engaged in morning activities. Parishioner Vera Warbrooke almost tempted the Bishop to participate in a game of Whist but time did not allow it!

As the Care Centre is connected to Cobh General Hospital the Bishop paid a short visit there to meet with parishioner Madge Berry.

From there the party went to Bellevue School where an eager bunch of children awaited. The Bishop talked with the senior pupils first, asking and answering questions and practising his Irish. The juniors in the second room were agog with excitement at meeting "the Dean's boss", to quote one wise young man! When the Bishop sat down at one of the tables, that was best of all and after that nobody paid any attention to the clock or going home, it was all about exchanging ideas.

Lunch was in Fota House, followed by a welcome to St Colman's Cathedral and a fascinating tour of the building given by Father Michael Fitzgerald that included climbing many steps to admire the view!

The final visit of the day was to the Family Resource Centre where Elaine Fahy explained in detail the wonderful work and activity that happens in the Centre -- a creche, courses in family management, computers, health concerns, parenting and so on.

May 2004

Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross on Hockey Tour to Prague

As Patron of Incorporated Church of Ireland Cork Young Men's Association, Garryduff, the Bishop joined the Church of Ireland 1st X1 men's hockey team (Irish Champions 2003) when they travelled to Prague on Thursday May 27 '04 to represent Ireland by competing in the Men's European Hockey Championships.

C of I were drawn in Pool B with SG Amsicora (Italy), Slavia Praha (Czech Rep) and Kolos Vinnita (Ukraine). They lost the first two matches but won their third and the games provided valuable experience for the younger members of the team. The team representing Ireland in the 2005 Championships (Instonians HC) will play in Pool C.

With 18 players in the squad, it was never on the cards that the Bishop would be called upon to play, however, he is a regular and keen supporter of the team, especially at Cup matches. Club President Jack Hanna was delighted that Bishop Colton was able to join the 40 or so supporters and their cheering and presence were greatly appreciated.

General Synod 2004

Armagh city is a place steeped in history and the events of the **General Synod**, held there from Tuesday May 11 to Thursday May 13 2004, brought even more historical moments: it was the first time General Synod has met in the Primatial See and therefore it was also a first for Archbishop Eames to preside over the Synod in his own diocese. And it was the first time an Archbishop of Canterbury preached at a General Synod Service, held this year in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh.

On day one of General Synod 2004, each member of Synod and special guests was given an elegant pew edition of the Book of Common Prayer 2004, these being the gift of the Archbishop of Armagh and Armagh Diocesan Council. Then, prior to the President's 2004 Address, Mr Seán O Boyle of Columba Press presented the President with the copy that for future years will be laid on the table of the General Synod at the start of its annual business. Other special leather bound editions, including one in braille and one in Irish, were presented to the two Primates and to those involved in the preparation of the new book, Dean Michael Burrows being one of the recipients.

The Synod was historic also because of the collective presence of The Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, **Dr Seán Brady**, The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, **Dr Ivan Mc Kay**, and the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, **the Reverend Jim Rea**, and in his **Presidential Address** Archbishop Eames acknowledged the fellowship, co-operation and joint witness of the Church leaders, saying, "Through years of darkness, uncertainty and suffering for members of all our traditions and now as we struggle to build a peaceful and just society, Church leaders have been able to share, plan and pray together. My colleagues come as fellow pilgrims and friends, together with representatives of their Churches, whose fellowship I greatly value."

Referring to **the Book of Common Prayer 2004**, the Primate had this to say, "A Church is identified by its worship. A prayer Book is the identity of the people of God in any tradition. When we are asked '*What is the Church of Ireland?*' we can

point to this book -- **this is who we are, this is how we worship, this is what we are.**"

In this far-reaching Address the Primate commented on the New Europe and the challenge to the Christian Churches of Europe to foster reconciliation and to proclaim the Christian ethos to the diversity of nations. He expressed concern at the sinister rise in racially motivated attacks. " In both our jurisdictions racial attacks on people and homes are sinister and threatening for the future. **Let the Synod condemn without reservation such attacks on people because of class, colour or creed.**"

Mention was also made of Anglican Communion problems, the ongoing work of the Lambeth Commission and the sexuality issue, with a call for listening, openness and prayerful consideration of opinions contrary to one's own, although, "unfortunately listening and creating space to exercise sensitivity to others is not always a dormant priority in Church life."

The greater part of the Address dealt with the current political process in Ireland and the healing of memories. The Archbishop made the plea "**let the mounting calls for an end to all paramilitary activity grow and grow. From within the Protestant community let us say to all loyalist groupings - stop and stop now.**"

Both communities, he said, must speak up on the issue of paramilitarism; neither community can allow itself to be misrepresented. Neither community should allow elements within it to dictate its life through threat or intimidation. Let criminal activity of whatever identity be seen for what it is: nothing to do with legitimate politics, nothing to do with the protection of religious or political identity and nothing to do with a stable, just and forgiving community for the future.

The only Bill of 2004 was to do with amendments to the clergy pension contribution scheme and although this topic might not have been considered riveting it did attract a considerable number of speakers, plus the traditional witticisms.

Greater time was now available for **Annual Reports** and minds were fresh and eager, especially for the lengthy RCB and Standing Committee Reports. This 'housekeeping' business is in fact very important and provides the opportunity for Synod members to question, to express opinions or to share ideas. As always, a high percentage of Cork, Cloyne and Ross members rightly availed of the opportunity.

Dealing with **the RCB report**, the picture given of "around 670 clergy (more than 70 of them non stipendiary) in 12 dioceses with a total of around 470 incumbencies" seems mind-boggling, especially when considering the management and the serving of the needs of the same. Mention was made of a newly installed management system (CHIMP), the need for sabbatical programmes, ethical investment, video conferencing, each worthy of consideration.

The Standing Committee Report highlighted the challenge of synodical reform, the European Union and legislative change and "Martini weddings" - the anytime, any place, any where variety - and it was interesting to note that in all of the seventeen Reports, plus the observations of speakers to the reports, questions were put to the house with many left hanging in the air, questions obviously deserving of deeper discussion at a later time, even 'back home' in dioceses and parishes.

To set the thinking processes in action, I have made a random choice of some of these:

Do we have too many dioceses with all that goes with them?

Are we (the C of I) perhaps resentful that someone from another part of the world should presume to offer advice?

What happens if we view baptism and not ordination as the primary calling to ministry?

Do you believe your parish has a social responsibility that extends beyond those who look on themselves as parishioners?

For the first time ever there are as many people in training for the Auxiliary Ministry as for Stipendiary Ministry, therefore, is the traditional method of a

Theological College on academic lines still the most appropriate and cost effective?

If a disabled person were to go forward for ordination what would happen?

In 2014, will the Church of Ireland be inclusive, relevant, outward looking, needed by the community?

Am I holding up change because I don't want to move from the comfort zone?

And there were more. Many more.

Providing a break in the Reports section, three thought-provoking **Presentations** were introduced, by **the Commission on Ministry, the Church of Ireland Youth Department and the Church in Society Committee**. The message of each hit home and woke members up to vital issues facing the Church of Ireland, issues that will not go away. The use of Power point strengthened each given message and this opened up further lively debate for speakers to Reports but also during the valuable networking that takes place during Synod, over lunch, when having coffee and (this year) in the outside 'smoking department'!

Because Armagh is a small city members could easily climb the hill to **St Patrick's Cathedral** on Tuesday evening for the annual Synod Service. This service produced one of those inspirational moments one treasures: the colourful cathedral, the incredible volume of the singing, the words of wisdom of the Archbishop of Canterbury and joy.

The following evening a reception for members of Synod, hosted by the **Lord Mayor of Armagh**, was held in a large marquee in the grounds of the Bishop's Palace, now owned and beautifully maintained by Armagh City Council. This was also an evening of celebration and socialising and diocesan groups were taken on tours of the Palace and its chapel in the company of 'servants' from another era to admire the architecture and hear snippets of the history of the house and its occupants. All 'church business' and no play could make Synod members staid and dozy!

General Synod 2004 in Armagh did prove to be memorable, not least because of the obvious view of two cathedrals on two hills and an ever-present witness to the Faith that, as Archbishop Eames said, "**must be as alive this morning as it was when Patrick walked on this soil.**"

Diocesan Launch of The Book of Common Prayer St Fin Barre's Cathedral, May 20 2004

Thursday May 20 was an historical day for Church of Ireland members of Diocese as they met in St Fin Barre's Cathedral for the Diocesan Launch of the new **Book of Common Prayer 2004**. This new Book of Common Prayer is only the eighth such revision in nearly 600 years. It is a thorough-going revision of the prayer book and includes, for the first time and in one book, the main liturgical services of the Church in both traditional language and contemporary language. The book is also printed in Braille and in Irish.

The attendance included Representatives of other Churches and Civic guests, including Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr P J Hourihan. Most of the serving and retired clergy of the Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross were robed, as well as Diocesan readers and a large number of parishioners came from all over the diocese to witness this noteworthy happening.

The altar, desk and personal prayer books were dedicated by the Bishop who, in welcoming all to the cathedral, said that these books offered us all a new beginning, and he hoped we would "lift the words and make them our own to shape our worship."

The Reverend Gilly Myers, Succentor of Durham Cathedral, preached and said, "Ascension Day is a marvellous day to launch a Prayer Book as Ascension is very much about worship and mission." She feels that the Book of Common Prayer has much to commend it in its unity and diversity, its traditional and contemporary services, its language, shape and structure and it is also a book to be used to help people pray "beyond the church walls and beyond the gathering."

Following the very celebratory service, congregation and clergy were invited by Dean Burrows to gather in the cathedral forecourt for refreshments and the

celebrations ended with the Dean, assisted by the children present, releasing balloons into the sky to make Cork city aware that a new Prayer Book had arrived.

April 2004

Abbeystrewry celebrates a new Rector

Skibbereen town and environs pulled out all the stops on Friday April 23 2004 to welcome new rector, Bruce Hayes to his first parish, Abbeystrewry Union. Traffic came from all directions - Belfast, Dublin and all corners of the diocese - while spring sunshine augured well for a joyful evening of celebration.

The Bishop presided and many parishioners participated in the service of Institution. The congregation included the Chairman of Skibbereen Town Council, town councillors, local dignitaries, representatives from other churches, friends from Dublin, former parishioners of St Finian's Church, Belfast, where Bruce was Curate and many of the new parishioners all eager to meet their young rector. Great outpouring of support was evident as the gifts were presented to Bruce and, most appropriately for such an evening, the key of the door so as to "let the doors of this place be open to all people."

In his sermon, Canon Noel Battye, Rector of Cregagh Parish, stated that he would not tell us what a warm, kindly, sociable young couple Bruce and Samantha Hayes are, with their solid values and their interest in people exactly as they are, but he did mention the lasting impression they had made on the parishioners of St Finian's which explained why they had braved airport fog and the intricacies of the M50 to be here in Skibbereen. Bruce will now be pastor, prophet and priest, he said, and prayer will underlie all he does. He really cares and so "your concerns will be his concerns."

Afterwards a very cordial reception was held in the parish hall with recurring reference to a remark made by the Bishop in June 2003, "when you have a good rector, hang on to him."

Speakers included the Bishop, Father John O Donovan of Skibbereen, The O Donovan and Henry Ritchie who with Peter Ranking of Cregagh Parish presented

Bruce with a framed photograph to remind him of time he spent in Uganda.

At last the new rector was given his chance to say how he, Samantha, and Baby Jack had already experienced an "utterly brilliant" two weeks in Skibbereen and he was looking forward to being "a servant of people who are so gracious in their welcome."

In a town such as Skibbereen a new rector with fresh ideas and energy is indeed a very welcome person -- the fact that he is a rugby player also comes high on the urban agenda!

March 2004

**CHURCHES GROWING IN IRELAND –
A MAJORITY BUT NOT A MONOPOLY
PLURALISM NOT AN EXCUSE FOR AN IMPOTENT SECULARIST
AGENDA**

Preaching at the Annual Civic Service, (attended by the Lord Mayor and City Council of Cork together with civic leaders and voluntary workers) to mark Saint Patrick's Day in St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork, the Right Reverend Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, said that leaders in the new Ireland have to get used to responding to the needs of people whose expectations are not moulded by the Christian tradition; and Christian churches, for their part, have to come to terms with sharing the stage with others.

Reflecting on the preliminary results of the 2002 Census in relation to religion, Bishop Colton, underlined, on the one hand, that "religion – albeit in many guises – is still important to the people of Ireland" and on the other, said that account had to be taken of the fact that the numbers not espousing any religion had increased greatly.

Understanding the pluralism of the Irish religious scenario calls for maturity, he said.

"There is a danger in some of the voices we hear in response to this new religious

tapestry in Ireland that pluralism becomes an opportunist's excuse to peddle an impotent secularism. Pluralism is not a vacuous nothingness, an anaemia of ideals that impoverishes society and drains the nutrients out of its spiritual soul. Rather it is an energetic, animated diversity, where the variety is celebrated, is mutually enriching and the integrity of the other is valued equally."

The Bishop challenged that achieving this will require openness, a commitment to dialogue, partnership and an affirmation of the truths we perceive in one another.

February 2004

Celebration at St Mary's Church, Carrigaline

On the evening of Monday February 9 there was a great sense of delight as parishioners of St Mary's Church, Carrigaline, and members of the Carrigaline community entered the church to celebrate the restoration of the church after fire.

Bishop Colton, Presiding Minister, welcomed all to the service and commented on the transformation that had taken place since March 23 2003 when all looked black and bleak. The service itself, however, was bright and meaningful with the emphasis on gratitude, dedication and celebration, and none more overjoyed than Rector David Armstrong.

The Scripture Readings were given by the Revd Daniel Nuzum and Churchwarden Rosemary Powell, with Father Bertie O Mahony of Carrigaline reading the Gospel. Members of the parish also participated in prayer readings.

The original organ was destroyed in the fire but a replacement organ was bought from St Louis' Convent, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan and organist Hilary Dring put it to full power during the hymn singing and the two anthems sung by the choir.

The Preacher, The Right Revd David Conner, Dean of Windsor and Bishop to the Crown, said it was a pleasure and a privilege to be present at such a significant moment in the parish's history. Disciples, he said, heal, restore, repair damage,

mend and put things into shape and this is what has been achieved in the restoration process and so, " as we come together at the Lord's table, we can commit and we can love one another. We see each other as mere human beings and know that we belong to each other."

Bishop Conner is a personal friend of the rector and it was in honour of that he took time out of a busy and demanding schedule to come to Carrigaline. His visit was a special honour for the parish and earlier in the day he met older parishioners and also the Primary School children.

On the practical side of the transformation of St Mary's, praise is due to O Shea Builders (Cork) Ltd, Architects WH Hill and Son, Conservation Consultants Jack Coughlan Associates for their splendid work, completed in a relatively short period of time.

Immense gratitude and congratulations go to Churchwardens Rosemary Powell and Eddie Pierce and to David Armstrong for their vision and sheer hard work on the project from start to finish. This work now becomes history.

In the earlier part of the service, Father O Mahony wished a blessing on St Mary's church: *That this house of prayer may continue to bring people closer to God and God closer to people.* All God's houses could come under this blessing.

Institution of new Rector in St Mary's Collegiate Church, Youghal

It is not too often that the historic Collegiate Church of Saint Mary, Youghal, is packed with people but that was the case on the evening of Friday February 6 2004, on the occasion of the Institution of The Revd Andrew Mc Croskery as Rector of Youghal Union (Youghal, Castlemartyr, Ardmore), apparently the 79th incumbent cleric since the year 1220.

The Bishop preformed the institution and also preached and participating in the service were parishioners Lesley Moloney, Raymond Bryan, John Phillips, Suzy Bryan, Patrick Williams and Ria Hunter. The Revd Hazel Minion, Templebreedy

Group, read the Gospel and the wonderful, almost medieval music was led by members of the choir of St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork, with Choirmaster Colin Nicholls.

Present in the congregation were representatives of the religious, political, business and cultural community of Youghal, Midleton and environs. These included Deputy Dan Stanton TD; Sean Ring, Mayor of Youghal and fellow Town Councillors; Barbara Murray, President of Youghal Chamber of Tourism and Commerce; Canon Ken Smith of Newtownards; representatives of other Churches; clerical colleagues from the Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross and a large number of people from St Fin Barre's Parish, Cork. All were there to give welcome, support and encouragement to the new and very young Rector.

In 2002, Andrew Mc Croskery came from Newtownards, Co Down, to Cork city as Dean's Vicar in St Fin Barre's Cathedral and he was appointed Domestic Chaplain to the Bishop of Cork in 2003.

The evening was a very special occasion for the parishioners of Youghal Union who are proud of the town of Youghal and of their own contribution to its vibrant community spirit. Speaking to thank everyone for making the evening memorable, the Rector said it was an honour and privilege to be here in both Church and local community and he was greatly looking forward to participating in the Christian pilgrimage of his parish.

The beautiful and historic church of St Mary's was the perfect setting for this beginning of a young Rector's incumbency.

January 2004

The Blessing of the new Douglas Rectory

"Peace be to this house" were the words that began the Blessing of Douglas Rectory by the Bishop on Friday January 23 2004, a memorable event for Douglas Union with Frankfield. A large group of parishioners and guests, including Father Liam O Regan of Douglas, attended the blessing ceremony, congratulated all concerned in the whole process and admired both house and view.

The first sod on the site of the house was turned by the Bishop on March 13 2003 and it is due to incredible work and cooperation from architect Eric Beamish of Carrigaline, builder Kieran Twomey of Crosshaven, and a deeply committed parish committee and vestry that the building was finished on time, December 5 2003, when the Wilkinson family moved in.

The imposing red brick five bedroomed house is situated on an elevated site overlooking Douglas itself and with stunning views of the city stretching west and north. We wish the Adrian, Jacqui, Gary, Darren and Emma every blessing and happiness in their time in the rectory.
