

December 2005

Ireland is in an Adolescent Phase in its response to a new Religious Pluralism

Preaching on Christmas Day in St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork, the Right Reverend Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork said that he believes that in Ireland we are still in an adolescent phase when it comes to understanding our new found religious pluralism, as seen in the reactions to the continuing of role of religions in our society, and in education, for example.

Reflecting on the way the Christmas story has shaped human society and culture he said:

"In some parts of the world it has got to the point where people want Christmas without Christianity.

We in Ireland find ourselves, I believe, still in an adolescent phase when it comes to understanding our new found religious pluralism. This adolescence is seen on the many sides of reaction to the continuing role of religion in our society. The response of some in the churches is to retreat either to a nostalgic wistfulness – a longing for the way things were - or worse, to an authoritarian, exclusive, Christendom paradigm, both of which ignore the reality of change, and indeed, the God-given grace in the opportunities and characteristics of our time. Equally, those who assert a secularising agenda ignore the simple reality that many Irish people, and indeed many of the new Irish, are people of faith and spirituality.

The cause of pluralism is not advanced either by a naïve enamour with new religious groupings to the exclusion of established churches. What is needed is a mature pluralism that values all, and embarks on intelligent and informed dialogue about the place of religion in our society.

Very real questions have to be asked. For example, there appears to be a concerted effort on the part of some to dismantle the churches' involvement in education. All is depicted in terms of either/or extremes. Many of the arguments put forward fail to take account of the fact that Ireland is still, even if only residually, a predominantly Christian country.

The formal dialogue the government is establishing with the churches will need to facilitate an intelligent and mature process which helps us to move beyond an adolescent understanding of what it means to live in a society with many expressions of faith.

October 2005

Not Everyone has Equal Access to Justice in Ireland

Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork at Church Service in Saint Michan's Church, Dublin to mark the Start of the Law Term

Bishop Paul Colton, Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork has said that Irish people do not have equal access to the justice system in our country. He said that not only is the current civil legal aid scheme inadequate, but also some laws which rely on volunteers for their implementation - such as in education - are becoming too complicated.

The Bishop was speaking to a congregation which included members of the judiciary, solicitors and barristers gathered at the annual Church Service at St Michan's Church, Church Street, Dublin to mark the beginning of the Michaelmas Law Term.

Bishop Colton said that because civil legal aid is heavily means tested there is a very real concern that " ...many people – owners of modest homes – with middle of the road income levels – acquiesce in what they perceive to be an injustice perpetrated against them, rather than risk the costs involved in seeking access to justice."

Referring to the report of the Free Legal Advice Centres launched last July - Access to Justice: Right or Privilege – he said that he agreed with the conclusion that equal access to justice is surely a fundamental human right. The State and all of its organs should incorporate the recognition of this right into all aspects of its law, policy and practice. Those who have rights must have a meaningful and effective method of enforcing them.

Bishop Colton also said that there are areas of the law "....principally implemented by ordinary people – many who are volunteers – who need to be able to access and understand those laws, if key activities in our society are to thrive." He gave two examples: education and charitable work. He said:

"Those of us who are patrons of schools in Ireland and are dependent on volunteers for the management of those schools, have immense and growing concerns that the new, and increasingly vast area of education law, is not sufficiently straightforward for the average volunteer on which most local communities depend for its implementation. Volunteers, at great personal sacrifice, are being terrified into inertia, to the detriment of the education of our young people. Already, I believe that body of legislation needs to be re-examined."

"The long overdue reform of charity law is, we are told, on the way early next year. This is a sector which undoubtedly needs regulation, but as former Chief Justice, Ronan Keane, wisely warned, great care is '...needed in the drafting of legislation so as to ensure that it does not unduly hinder the work of the dedicated and unselfish people who help to raise funds for organisations benefiting many people.'"

June 2005

**Diocesan Synod Address given in Cork
by The Right Rev. Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and
Ross**

11th June 2005

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 seventh as Bishop!

New Synod

This is the first session of this Diocesan Synod of a new triennium, and so I welcome all of you who have offered yourselves. As your bishop, I assure you that your voluntary commitment as Synod members and your work within the Church is not taken for granted.

There are 146 members on the Synod. 43 (that is 37.07%) are new this time round. That is a healthy basis for moving forward. It represents a good basis in any electoral process whereby the voting process ensures both continuity and succession: treasuring the experience of the past and building for future work. As an aside 84 men and 62 women constitute the Synod - that is a far healthier balance than on the General Synod!

This year I thought we ought to put the new members to the test. Travelling around the diocese I discovered the ideal way to ask them to prove themselves.....!

Cork2005

We meet in a significant year for city and county: Cork2005 European Capital of Culture. In preparation for it, our Clergy Conference in 2004 drew together a galaxy of speakers to help us reflect on the place, architecture, history, literature and life of Cork to enhance our sense of context for mission and ministry.

In this year we are also beginning the reconstruction of our Diocesan Website to make it a more effective tool for communication and administration.

Mindful also of our heritage - ecclesiastical sites, sacred spaces and religious heritage - we hope to encourage tourists to Cork to visit and encounter these places - a type of spirituality and religious heritage trail. Three tour routes which come to mind initially are: one based on the city and south county. Another that goes westwards and comes back through West Cork; and another to Cobh, Cloyne, Youghal and Ardmore in the east. I'm glad to announce that Cork-Kerry Tourism have expressed interest in partnering us in this with funding and expertise.

Our Clergy Conference later this year will have a cultural theme. The Reverend Canon Dr David Brown who is Van Mildert Professor of Divinity at Durham University will speak on the subject of Religion and Art.

Finally, in recognition of Cork's role this year the House of Bishops held its Spring residential meeting in Cork - a "home-coming" for many of the Bishops - during which they met leaders from civic life, other institutions and the Church, and even climbed the tower of Saint Anne's, Shandon to ring Cork's famous bells in resonating harmony.

Four postcards

As to our calling in our exciting times, I share with you some postcards, word pictures, as it were:

DJ

At a fringe event in the Diocese several weeks ago I met a parent with her daughter. Looking at my purple shirt and cross she said: "What's he, mummy?" The mother thought and said to her 8 year old: "He's a sort of D.J." The syntax of the Christian sub-culture, even close to home, is no longer universally recognised

and requires translation.

Local Shopping Centre

One Saturday morning recently while waiting to go to the dentist I took a wander around a Shopping Centre in the village where I grew up. A hardware shop has been replaced with a health foods and alternative therapies store. The public notice board promotes numerous mutual help and self-help groups.

Bands

I look at the craze for wrist bands of all hues and persuasions, most recently in the news because of the controversy surrounding the production of the makepovertyhistory bands in allegedly suspect work conditions in China. This campaign together with that of the Bob Geldof's Live8 concert represents a coalition between all sorts of campaigners, ideologies and believers, and those with straightforward humanitarian concern. We see the same with the ecological agenda.

Spirituality Shopper

Watching Channel Four last Monday night I came across Spirituality Shopper. It traced the search for meaning in her successful life of a professional woman who works in advertising. Jonathan Edwards a well-known Christian and Olympic medallist introduced her to four spiritualities: Buddhist meditation, Christian Lent, Sufi whirling and the Jewish Shabbat. It represented a pick n mix cross between new age revelation and retail therapy; a type of spiritual potpourri. It is described as a series that offers all of the karma and none of the dogma. There is immense interest out there, not always well placed in spirituality and sacred places.

These times - a challenge to the Church

Window shopping for religion should come as no surprise to us. What I find disturbing is that it would appear that many people are finding elsewhere that which they should be finding par excellence in the Christian Church: grace, love, forgiveness, commitment, fellowship/belonging, healing and so much more. Why is it that these things are not always manifest in the Church?

Even the language of the Gospel is wrested from us at times: debt forgiveness is the most recent example. Mission statements are now the preserve of the corporate sector. The market forces that pervade the spiritualities of our time find consumers among many who are indeed inherently and latently religious: those

who do believe in God, but who regard with suspicion the institution of the Church.

Our response has to continue to be one of proclamation. I hear people saying things like - our numbers are going down, and of course there will be parts of the diocese where demography militates against growth, but equally I say to most: let's grow the Church. When our clubs, societies, teams, businesses and the like need more members we go out and find new members. Let us do that for the Church of Jesus Christ: the way the disciples did - "Come and See!," they invited. Let us go to those who are searching and ask, invite and welcome.

A Challenge to the Church

In this connection, I again urge all of us - the Church in the Diocese - not to reject common religion/folk religion - that which we so easily despise as nominalism. Time and time again in my own ministry my judgmental assessments have been shown to be wrong: tempted to look askance at those whose commitment seemed watery, I have again and again had the sobering experience of seeing them pilgrimaging into relationship with the living God and belonging to his Church. And it has to be said, the gateway was very often those so-called rites of passage: baptism, marriage and pastoral care at the time of illness and bereavement.

Anglican Way

Our Anglican way - our exasperating breadth and smudgy-edged inclusiveness - is frequently difficult not only for our brothers and sisters in other Christian churches to understand, but also, even for ourselves, as current times in our Anglican Communion show, it can be perplexing and seem out of our own grasp.

William Countryman. Professor of New Testament in Berkeley, California puts it this way:

"Anglicanism is notorious for its theological indeterminacy. ...[It] exists in a mode unlike that of most Western Christian traditions. It has never been a genuinely confessional church. It is the product of historical accident (and/or divine providence) as much as of theological intent, and its primary focus is not on defining itself but on turning a community towards God in worship."

I came across recently what I consider to be a very helpful view articulated by a

former Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie:

"Confronted by the wistful, the half-believing and the seeking, we know what it is to minister to those who relate to the faith of Christ in unexpected ways. We do not write off hesitant and inadequate responses to the gospel. Ours is a church of the smoking flax, of the mixture of wheat and tares. Critics may say that we blunt the edge of the gospel and become Laodicean. We reply that we do not despise the hesitant and half-believing, because the deeper we look into human lives the more often we discern the glowing embers of faith."

Faithfulness

Travelling around the Diocese I see so much of value that is truly a continuing and worthy response to our situation and God's calling to us. I describe it simply as faithfulness. There is so much faithfulness in our diocese that I thank God for it. As I drive around on my way to this service or that on Sunday mornings I see cars parked outside churches, people going in or coming out, churchyards beautifully cared for, developments taking place.

I see faithfulness in major projects such as in Rosscarbery; or with the canon Packham Hall in Douglas; in the work of our new Youth Council; through the Mothers' Union and many diocesan and youth organisations; in the work of our charities such as Saint Luke's Home and in so much more.

In the dramatic opening of the new Star Wars movie - Episode 3 - Revenge of the Sith the young Jedi knight Anakin Skywalker in the midst of battle and a daring rescue operation is on the verge of being distracted from his main task. His teacher and mentor Obi-Wan Kenobi, in the midst of the confusion, recalls his focus to the task in hand: "Keep your eyes on what we're meant to be doing." This is the sort of focus we need also - a focus fixed firmly on the calling of Jesus Christ to us.

Religion in the Irish State

Religion is a significant dynamic in Irish society and religious institutions continue to play a creative role and a Statute based role in so many sectors: particularly education, marriage law, healthcare and a whole variety of charitable endeavours on which the welfare of many in our community depends.

The level of religious affiliation is well-endorsed (as I pointed out at last year's

Synod) by the Census returns of 2002. According to Article 44 the State is to respect and honour religion.

I give two examples of the imperative for this process of structuring the relationship between Church and State to be carried forward.

Much heard about in recent weeks in the media has been the reference to the reform of the law governing charities. There has been consultation. The legislation is overdue. Charities need to be registered, accountable and regulated. Most charitable endeavour, however, is based on volunteers. The law-makers need to realise that over-regulation will stifle charitable work, and all of us in Ireland would be impoverished as a result.

On the same theme, and already overregulated, I believe by necessary, but unduly complicated legislation that is weighted against voluntary participation is our growing body of recent education law. As I mentioned at General Synod recently, and as we discovered at our training day for Boards of Management, in my experience School Boards are feeling vulnerable, fearful and anxious - to the detriment of their main mission: partnership in the education process of the children of this nation.

It is indeed time for the State to find new and structured ways of working with the Churches and religious groupings in Ireland. I welcome the announcement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the course of the 75th Anniversary of the diplomatic relations with the Holy See that the Government considers it would be "...of value to institute open, transparent and regular dialogue with churches and non-confessional organisation on the same lines as the provided for at European level...."

In Dáil Éireann the Taoiseach quoted this and elaborated on it in response to questions on 14th December last. I am aware that the Office of the Taoiseach has initiated contact with the Church leaders in relation to this matter and that, on our behalf, the Archbishops have given an initial welcome. Now it remains for Church and State alike to enter into deeper dialogue.

In this regard we have much to learn from the nature of these relationships in other European States. It may be a more complex exercise than we, at first, realise. The pattern of religious affiliation in Ireland is less homogenous than it

once was, and we do not have the tradition here as other European countries have of concordats or formal agreements between Churches and State.

The current anatomy of the relationship is no longer desirable: it is principally and unsatisfactorily based on informal or personal contact, local knowledge, occasional consultation, unwritten understandings, lobbying and social comment from a distance. The significant voluntary commitment of the churches in many sectors deserves better; and the State's interests in the key areas I have mentioned are inadequately catered for by such informality also. Such contact that there is centres, more usually, on administrative detail than policy consultation.

In addition, many new and smaller churches do not have the same, albeit informal access to Government. In the Dáil last December the Taoiseach listed eighteen churches, faiths and associations. And here we have the first of the challenges in such a process. How is the State going to define religion? How will "church" be determined? How and who will determine who will be included in the newly structured relationship?

How, on the one hand, is the role of small minority interests to be protected and affirmed, and on the other is regard to be had of the significant commitment which larger religious bodies invest in their partnership with society?

This is a welcome process initiated by the government. We in the Church of Ireland should be actively committed to it. Both parties need to be aware that it is not as simple as may seem at first sight. But it is needed for the sake of the involvement which, as I say, we have in key areas - education, charitable work, healthcare, marriage law - and no doubt other areas will emerge as Irish society continues its pace of change.

Last year I was privileged to be invited to address the European Consortium for Church and State Research on this area - the subject of Religion and Law in Dialogue - at the University of Tübingen, and later this year will join the consortium again to give another paper, this time in Höör in Sweden."

ACC

Speaking of Conferences, the Dean of Cork will be one of two representatives from the Church of Ireland at the meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in

Nottingham in ten days' time. These are challenging days for the Anglican family: Dean as you go, you go with our prayers and solidarity.

Institutional Anatomy of the Church of Ireland

In enterprises such as this we need to remain focussed, however, on our core calling. We are a Church, called to minister to God's people and to proclaim the Gospel. I turn, therefore, from the anatomy of Church-State relations to our own framework as a Diocesan Synod.

Since it is a new Synod with so many new members and since, in our consultation process concerning Diocesan Synod, so many long-standing members suggested that a basic guide to the Synod would be helpful. I ask the forbearance of those of you who know everything about all of this already.

When the Church of Ireland was disestablished in 1871 following the passing of the Irish Church Act, 1869 two key things happened. First, the ban on the Church having synod meetings/assemblies was lifted. Second, the ecclesiastical law of Ireland ceased to exist as law - that is to say it was no longer the law of the land, but what is important to understand is that it continued to be the law of the Church of Ireland, and is binding on us as members of the Church of Ireland because as members we have voluntarily agreed to be bound together by those laws.

So what did the Church do? The ban on meeting was lifted - so a General Convention was held. That convention wrote and agreed a Preamble and Declaration - a type of title deed document which among other things roots us in the Christian tradition of the Scriptures; the faith of the early Church as well as of the Reformation; the threefold ministry of bishops, priest and deacons; and espouses the Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal.

As well as that they wrote a Constitution - a rule book for the Church which has been revised on fourteen occasions since and is now organised in fifteen chapters.

As well as a Constitution, following disestablishment, the Representative Body was set up by Royal Charter to hold the property of the Church and to look after it for the benefit of the mission and ministry of the Church.

So to summarise - 1870 was a key year. By the beginning of the next year - it

was a remarkable achievement at a difficult time that the Church had its key new structures in place:

- The Preamble and Declaration
- The Constitution
- The General Synod
- The Representative Body

The Diocesan Synod

Diocesan Synod is elected by the people in the parishes to make local choices and decisions that affect us all.

In turn, Diocesan Synod elects people who will be on Diocesan Council - to continue the work of the Synod throughout the year.

Diocesan Synod elects our representatives to General Synod where the laws and policy of the Church are made. Through those elections you choose people who by their votes and membership make choices that affect us all: for example, new hymn books and prayer books; the stipends of the clergy and so on.

Diocesan Synod elects the people who together with similar representatives from the wider Church choose your bishop.

Diocesan Synod chooses representatives from this Diocese to serve on the trustee body - the Representative Body.

So your work is important. Our meetings are an essential part of the process.

It is a business meeting, but it is more than that. As we meet we enjoy the social contact meeting fellow Christians from throughout the diocese and our brothers and sisters from other churches.

Also, through the committees that this Synod sets up we have a chance to focus on the ministry and mission of the Church; and to see things beyond the confines of our own parish, our own neck of the woods.

Reorganisation of Diocesan Synod

Since Diocesan Synod is important, in 2002 as President of the Synod I initiated a

process of consultation with the then members about the way we worked.

93.4% of those who replied said that they considered Synod to important, very important or essential in the life of the Diocese (45% - almost half - said it was essential). 90.7% indicated either that they were happy with the present format or would like to see modest change. With the idea of modest change in mind we tried various new things in recent years to make the Synod more relevant, more participative, more understandable and more engaging.

Those of you who served on the Synod in the last Triennium will notice that the experiments of the last three years have come to an end. With the exception of our visiting speaker - all those experiments are absent from this year's agenda. That is because this year it is time to decide whether or not you want to formalise the place of those experiments - the options and flexibility - within the structures of our Diocese.

Resolutions 1-10 on pages 21 and 22 of the Book of Reports represent modest change and do not rule out future change and imagination.

They are designed to promote a number of things:

- making connections between the work of Diocesan and General Synod (Resolution 2)
- the underscoring of the importance of the Service of Holy Communion and avoidance of repetition of religious ceremonies where the two are held in close proximity (Resolution 3)
- the giving of an opportunity to Synod members to discuss things I have referred to my address (Resolution 4)
- the removal of the hiatus whereby ecumenical guests who have been gracious enough to accept my invitation to attend and are already present in the room are the subject of a synod resolution as to whether or not they can stay (Resolution 5)
- the giving of an opportunity to those ecumenical visitors to address the Synod; (Resolution 6)
- creating the opportunity for distinguished visitors or consultants such as we have this year to address the Synod (Resolution 7)
- in case we need it, and we haven't had much need, but just in case, to have a fallback position for regulating the length of speeches within debates (Resolution

8)

- to connect our work with that of the General Synod by allowing a short report of the previous General Synod (Resolution 9)
- and the necessary resolution to tidy up the sequence of numbers (Resolution 10)

Other Resolutions

There are four other resolutions which are you being asked to pass. Numbers 12 and 15 on page 22 relate to the layout and presentation of the new book of rules and what also might conveniently be included in it.

I have suggested that resolution 11 should be passed to limit the Bishop's powers somewhat. Currently I have the right without consultation to appoint Diocesan Curates to serve in the Diocese as I see fit. There is currently no constraint on me, or my successors, to consult the Finance Committee or Diocesan Council. Consonant with the principle of episcopally led and synodically governed I believe the Bishop's authority should be limited in this area. That is the purpose of Resolution 11.

Resolution 13 relates of Safeguarding Trust. This is the Church of Ireland's Code of Good Practice for Ministry to Children. The Code was devised by the General Synod Board of Education, endorsed by Standing Committee and received by the General Synod. It has immense moral authority and in practical terms is advisable. I believe its authority should be stronger. The implementation of it should be legally binding on everyone within the Church. General Synod has not yet given it this legal status: it should. In the meantime, we as Diocese (as we so often do) should give a lead and make it legally binding so that no member of the clergy and no parish could decline to implement it.

CME

Last year the Diocesan Synod put in place the much-needed funding to support the on-going training of the clergy: Continuing Ministerial Education. That funding became available for use for the first time this January and is all the more important as the Priorities' Fund which has provided some funding in these areas has cut back on its allocation to each diocese.

Here are some examples of this CME:

- Last year two, the year before three and this year a further three of the clergy attended or will attend a training course for hospital chaplains organised by the Hospital Chaplaincies' Council - a link we have cultivated in England.
- The Reverend Peter Hanna attended a course on Critical Incident Stress Management.
- Two priests took part in a seminar concerning the Ministry of Reconciliation at which one of the speakers was the Archbishop of Canterbury.
- Last year Canon David Williams went on Sabbatical leave, and from tomorrow the Dean of Ross will leave on his. We wish him every blessing for the months ahead.
- A growing number of the clergy are availing of the facility we have put in place for an annual study week and retreat and which CME part funds. In the course of the year two priests were in Taizé on retreat.
- The Rev. Bruce Hayes is doing a week long course later this month in models of spirituality
- The Reverend William Olhausen has returned from a study week during which he gave a paper on interpreting the bible at Liverpool University.
- The Archdeacon will go on a week of academic study at Saint Anne's College, Oxford.
- The Reverend Brian O'Rourke whose ministry in Saint Luke's Home and in the Hospice is so much appreciated will next week do a course in spirituality and healing in the context of hospice care: an area highly relevant to his work
- All this is quite apart from the things we organise locally and the supply of resources for on-going training.
- CME covers also the costs of training lay people as well. Each year we have had a professionally run computer training course for clergy and lay workers in parishes alike.
- The day events for the Diocesan Readers are funded by CME.
- This year -two English bishops - leaders in the field of liturgy will be with us. In ten days time the Bishop of Portsmouth will be with the clergy to help them better to understand how to lead the celebration of the Holy Communion; and in November the Bishop of Salisbury will help us to understand better how we ought to celebrate baptism and confirmation: key points of contact in pastoral care and mission.
- It will share in the cost of training lay people through the Bishop's Course in Pastoral Work which will come on stream in 2006.

The list of what CME is beginning to achieve is endless and it will, most

importantly, I believe, bear fruit in better ministry and clergy fulfilment in the diocese.

I believe the clergy and lay church workers alike take all this as a sign of the encouragement of the Diocese for them; and a time when so much in the world is ambivalent towards Christian ministry, it is an affirmation of our clergy that we are prepared to invest in their on-going work and priestly development.

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:

- Mr Joe Stephens, so active in many aspects of the life of the Diocese, and who in this context served on Synod, on General Synod, Diocesan Council, as Diocesan Treasurer, on the Diocesan Reorganisation Working Party and on the Commission on Church Buildings.
- Mr Jack Lynch, who served not only in his parish, but also as a member of this Synod.
- The Reverend Ron Matthews, who served throughout Ireland, was well known for his years of service with the Leprosy Mission and who was Incumbent of Kinneigh Union from 1984 to 1993.

I also mention the death of those who, in retirement, ministered faithfully here

- the Very Reverend Peter Harvey, former Dean of Ossory
- the Reverend Hal Wilton, who officiated in Kinsale Union
- Canon Eddie Grant, who did so much for us while living at Kingston College

We offer our sincere sympathy to all their families, particularly to Vi Grant who has been bereaved only this week.

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 Hazel Minion was ordained priest

- the Reverend William Olhausen arrived in to Carrigrohane Union;
- the Reverend Helene Steed came from Sweden to the position of Dean's Vicar at St Fin Barre's Cathedral;
- we said farewell to the Reverend Stella Mikhail, now an Incumbent in the Diocese of Cashel and Ossory

In addition Canon Patrick Hewitt completed a term as Diocesan Director of Ordinands and I am most grateful to him. He has been succeeded by the Reverend Alan Marley.

Retirement

I am sad to announce that at the end of this year, and before the next time we meet, I will have accepted the retirement of our Diocesan Communications Officer, Sybil Fuller. This is the time to thank her for so much: her friendly participation, her conquest of technological skills, her creative writing and her PR support for all that we have been doing. For me as Bishop she has been invaluable. More and more as many in the media become more invasive and aggressive her support of me and the Diocese has been faithful and indispensable. Many a time she protected me and my family from journalists who tried to intrude on the privacy of our own lives with various levels of inquisitiveness and aggression. Sybil I will miss you - as will we all. Thank you for everything.

Sickness

Much in our thoughts and prayers as we meet today is one of our members Mr Brian Cairns, former headmaster of Midleton College who is ill in hospital. I ask the Dean of Cloyne, on behalf of us, to bring Brian our message of love and solidarity.

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, to the Archdeacon; our Diocesan Communications Officer; our ecumenical 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.

So as your DJ for the day I invite you to step out onto the floor of our Diocesan Synod - encouraging you all to join in - as together we do the business of this Diocese for 2005 enfolded in the love of what Sydney Carter's hymn styles The Lord of the Dance.

As W.H. Auden said in his poem Whitsunday at Kirchstetten

"...what do I know, except what everyone knows -

If there when Grace dances, I should dance."

Maybe that child was not so far off the mark, and it's not so bad being a sort of DJ after all!

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

May 2005

Irish Inter-Church Meeting 2005 held in Cork

Over 70 delegates representing the Christian Churches in Ireland gathered in Cork this week to attend the first Irish Inter-Church Annual Meeting to be held in the city and also to mark the city's year as European Capital of Culture 2005.

The visit began on the evening of Ascension Day, Thursday May 5, with a Service of Welcome in the Holy Family Church, Military Hill. The Address was given by the Most Reverend Seán Brady, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh and Co-chair of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting, who reminded the large congregation of the Ballymascanlan Meeting of 1973 that later became the Inter-Church Meeting that continues to this day. He mentioned some of the cultural and religious influences that converged to make Cork a worthy holder of its current cultural title and he also drew attention to the book of papers from The Working Party on Spirituality entitled "The Dearest Freshness Deep Down Things" that was to be launched on Friday afternoon, saying,

"They have invited us, like the readings of our Ascension Service, to fix our gaze on the things of heaven - to be people of prayer, people of the Scriptures, people of wisdom and theological reflection. They call us to read and interpret the signs of the times - and at the same time to hear the voice of the two men in white robes - drawing us back into active creative engagement with our surrounding culture."

Other Inter-Church representatives also participated in the service: Fr Bernard Cotter, Priest-in Charge, Holy Family Church; Fr Pat Mc Carthy, Revd John Faris, Revd Daniel Nuzum and Revd Geraldine Gracie, comprising the local Ecumenical Committee; Mrs Valerie Fitzgerald, Presbyterian Church; Revd Godfrey O'Donnell, Romanian Orthodox Church in Ireland; Right Reverend Peter Barrett, President of the Irish Council of Churches and Co-Chair of the ICCM, with the Church of Ireland choir from Carrigrohane Union, under the direction of Marg Everett, leading the music.

The Conference Dinner was later held in the Gresham Metropole Hotel with the Director of Cork 2005, John Kennedy, as guest speaker.

The theme of Friday morning's meeting was "Spirituality and Culture: making the connections at local level in Ireland" and, prior to group discussions, three speakers shared their experience of the theme: Revd Frances Bach, C of I, and a contributor to the Working Party on Spirituality, Pamela Hardesty, artist and lecturer, Crawford School of Art and Design, Cork, and An t-Athair Seosamh Ó' Cochláin, Dean of Honan Chapel, UCC.

A Plenary Session, "Information about Ecumenical Activity in the Cork area", followed and at lunch time delegates made their way to Cork City Hall where Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr Mary Sheilds, received the group and hosted a buffet lunch in its honour. The launch of the book, "The Dearest Freshness Deep Down Things," took place and then it was back to work on group discussion and evaluation until the meeting ended with prayers provided by the Lutheran Church.

April 2005

World Wide President of the Mothers' Union visits the diocese

The eagerly awaited diocesan visit of Trish Heywood, World Wide President of the Mothers' Union, took place from April 14 to 17 when many members were afforded the opportunity to meet her.

The action packed tour began on Friday morning in Cork City Hall where the Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr Seán Martin, hosted a reception for Trish who was accompanied by the Bishop, All Ireland President Paddy Wallace and Diocesan President Marg Everett. City development, stresses of life, multi-cultural inclusion and history were some of the topics raised and gifts were exchanged.

St Luke's Home was next on the agenda, to join residents, friends and staff for a Service of Eucharist. Time was then taken to talk to residents, to view the home, have lunch and even to attempt some tapestry in the craft room. On Friday evening, the Canon Packham Hall, Douglas, was packed for an event called "Food on the Run" (just what Trish needed!) and city and suburban members had the opportunity to meet and talk with both Trish and Paddy Wallace.

The MU Festival Service took place in St Fachtna's Cathedral, Rosscarbery, on Saturday morning and huge numbers of people attended, including a group from the Diocese of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh who had travelled by bus for this special occasion. Trish's Address centered on the worldwide MU theme for this year - peace and reconciliation- and she spoke of her own relationship with God, spiritual growth through membership of MU and how MU can bring valuable help and peace to troubled countries all over the world. She showed the white wristband she wears to remind herself of the goal MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY and suggested that people should access the MU website for ideas as to how to be involved in this movement. She also shared her experiences of travelling to over twenty countries and visits to prisons, hospitals, women's refuges, AIDS hospices, refugee camps and so on, places where MU members make a valuable and ongoing impact."

After the service and in glorious sunshine, Trish and Paddy Wallace met as many members as possible before all travelled to Clonakilty for lunch. In Clonakilty hall later in the evening a "Colour me beautiful" session provided entertainment and a further opportunity to socialise.

On Sunday morning it was back to the city for a morning service in Glanmire Church with the Address given by Trish, again emphasising the worldwide impact of MU and the inclusiveness of the organisation.

This tour from the World Wide President has given diocesan members much to think about and to work on, as well as happy memories of getting to know the person behind the office; a person who relates, listens, speaks her mind, smiles and an indefatigable worker on behalf of MU.

The House of Bishops Meets in the European Capital of Culture, 2005

The routine residential bi-monthly meeting of the House of Bishops, held this April from Monday 11 to Wednesday 13, was decidedly different!

To honour the fact of Cork being European Capital of Culture, 2005, the venue was transferred from Dublin to Cork and the two-day meeting was interspersed with social, cultural and learning opportunities that turned it into a unique event, and also a "home-coming" for those who have had ministerial or familial connections with the city or county.

To allow for an instantaneous and informal introduction to Cork personalities, the Bishop and Mrs Colton hosted a dinner in the Palace where the bishops met Bishop John Buckley of Cork and Ross, the Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr Seán Martin, the Mayor of Cork County, Cllr Paddy Sheehan, the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Mícheál Martin TD, and other local leaders and representatives of church, civic and commercial life. This proved a stimulating and enjoyable start to the episcopal agenda!

On Tuesday April 12, the Lord Mayor of Cork received the bishops, and the wives who were able to travel with them, at City Hall. In welcoming them officially to Cork, the Lord Mayor spoke briefly about Cork as a city and explained the background to the paintings, portraits and other items of interest in his office and he presented each bishop with a gift to commemorate the occasion and also an illustrated book on Cork.

Next stop was Collins Barracks, containing the biggest military training ground in Europe, where the group was welcomed by Brigadier General Pat Nash. The Officers' Mess houses notable paintings by Seán Keating, Patrick Hennessy, Harry Kernoff and, of particular interest, two paintings - "Leadership" by Josef Keyes and "Rath Mór" by Angie Shanahan, commissioned to celebrate Cork 2005 and based on the theme of "Cork Military."

The bishops met other army personnel who provided refreshments, more information and answered questions and then Comdt Dan Harvey led them on an enthralling tour of the Collins Barracks Military Museum (a must for all those interested in history), assisted by Curator Paddy Cremin.

St Michael's Church, to the south of the main square where Andrea Boccelli will soon be in concert, was the next place of interest and here is a very fine display of Evie Hone's stained glass windows. One bishop also spotted a poem on a stand that was hastily taken down on his computer toy for possible use in a future sermon!

Speaking on behalf of all, Archbishop Eames wished those in the Barracks all God's safety in their chosen profession and said "may you be long spared to make people proud of Ireland."

The finalé to the day's tour was to visit St Anne's Church to sit for a moment in this quiet oasis whose tower is a symbol of Cork and then all made the steep and body-bending treck up to the stage where the bells can be rung (with Lady Eames proving to be a natural bell-ringer) and thence to the top of the tower to soak up the panoramic views of a rapidly expanding city.

Soon it was back to the bus and 'business as usual' as the House of Bishops Meeting continued. The bishops received a significant presentation from three members of the National Suicide Research Foundation (of which our Bishop is a director) and also were introduced to some of the academic and practical aspects of Church Law as it relates to the Church of Ireland in two lectures given by our Bishop.

NEWS RELEASE FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN PAUL II

"On behalf of the Church of Ireland people of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, I extend our sympathy and sorrow to Bishop John Buckley of Cork and Ross, and also Bishop John Magee of Cloyne, together with the priests and people of their dioceses, following the death of His Holiness Pope John Paul II. On a personal level I sympathize with Bishop Magee who worked with and served His Holiness in his early years of leadership as Pope.

All of us of many Christian denominations who have lived witnessing the pontificate of John Paul II will remember with awe his energy in ministry around the globe, as well as the manifest confidence and simplicity of his faith. His pontificate has corresponded with an era of unprecedented change for societies all over the world, resulting in immense challenges for all churches. The Holy Father's commitment to this ecumenical challenge, not least through 'Ut Unum Sint' will be one aspect of his legacy on which we draw as the work of the churches together continues.

May he rest in peace, and rise in glory."

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

March 2005

SUN-UP GETS THE THUMBS-UP

Easter Morning is a special one every year but Easter Morning 2005 will stay in the memory of all who took part in the Dawn Service on Warren Strand, Rosscarbery, very early this past Easter Sunday. At around 6:00am (summer time!) the congregation assembled by a welcome fire before the service commenced. The Dean of Cork, the Very Rev. Michael Burrows, began the service by welcoming those present to an event that has been celebrated by Christians in this fashion for thousands of years. A short history of the dawn service was then heard. During the service, the worshipers made two trips down to the seashore: one to hear the story of Moses and the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, to the sound of the crashing waves and once again to the water, for the renewal of

Baptismal vows. Ringing bells, shouts of "Alleluia! Christ is risen indeed!" and bangs from party poppers met the new dawn in response to lighting of an Easter candle, symbolising the Light of the World and the Gospel story of the empty tomb. Two hymns were sung – without musical accompaniment – and of course, the central Easter Eucharist was celebrated. This joyous occasion was topped off with a feast of rashers and sausages cooked on a barbecue. What better a way to celebrate the most important event, not only in the Christian calendar but of all time?

The service did not run autonomously, however. SUN-UP began at 5:00pm on Saturday 26th. Over a dozen participants, of secondary school age, gathered for an evening of games, discussion, DVD-watching and of very little sleep! The leaders (of Cork, Cloyne and Ross Diocesan Youth Council and friends) were delighted to be with such a good group of young people and to celebrate the joy of Easter along with these and all those who gathered on the beach for that glorious, memorable Easter Dawn.

February 2005

Celebration in Douglas Union

The parishioners of Douglas Union have had good cause to celebrate! The eagerly awaited re-opening and re-dedication of The Canon Packham Hall (at a cost of €550,000) took place on Sunday February 27 and was the culmination of a weekend of festivities.

Four children representing the four parishes assisted the Bishop as he cut the tape and, following the dedication, the large number of parishioners present went inside for a wine reception and speeches, while the children were treated to face-painting, entertainment and food in the St Luke's School Assembly Hall.

The weekend began on Friday evening, with Elizabeth Shannon of Passage West taking her audience on an anecdotal food-trail that began in County Sligo and included such places as New York's Rainbow Room, Canada, the South of France and back to Passage West with food and recipes, prepared by her, from each destination. This was followed by pleasant wine-tasting and informative wine-history from Gary O Donovan of O Donovan's Off Licence, beginning with a

Ruinart Brut champagne to tempt those with wedding plans on mind. Plates of Elizabeth's food were handed round to complement the wine tasting.

On Saturday morning, people from far and near came to the hall for a Coffee Morning and in the afternoon children were catered for with a Beetle Drive. A Whist Drive in the evening rounded off that day's activity.

On Sunday, the Bishop congratulated the many people concerned in the project of upgrading and enlarging the complex and said it was a day for looking forward and "something to be proud of." However, he also reminded the children that by the time the next major overhaul of the building will be needed they will have to fundraise and plan together as the current Development Committee has done, because, "It'll be your turn!"

Bishop of Cork asks:

"Has Anglican Primates' Meeting exceeded its powers?"

The Church is not just bishops.

Request from Primates' meeting is not an enforceable decision.

The Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork, Bishop Paul Colton, in an initial response to the communiqué issued yesterday at the conclusion of the meeting of Primates in Northern Ireland, has said that the question has to be asked whether, in some respects, the Primates as a group have exceeded their powers as traditionally delineated within Anglicanism.

Bishop Colton said

"The Primates' Meeting was established relatively recently within Anglicanism. When it was set up in 1978 it was for nothing more than "leisurely thought, prayer and deep consultation". The Windsor Report (Paragraph 104) underlines this when it states that '...the Primates' Meeting itself has refused to acknowledge anything more than a consultative and advisory authority.'

I believe it is an anxiety of many within Anglicanism that the Primates' Meeting is

taking on a life of its own which is not supported either by the traditional understanding of the church or of church laws across the Anglican Communion.

The fact that so many in society at large and also in the media appear to see this communiqué as a decision about what the way forward will in fact be for Anglicanism, is a measure of the lack of clarity that has gained currency about the primates' collective role. This is seen, for example, with regard to the specific request to the Episcopal Church in the USA and to the Anglican Church of Canada, which is being referred to by some as those churches having been "thrown out" or suspended.

We all need to be reminded that bishops are not the sum total of the Church. The Church is people - lay and ordained (only some of whom are bishops) - who have decision-making authority about issues such as this together in Synod. Outside such Synods Archbishops and Bishops may speak personally. When Archbishops speak personally, or indeed collectively and internationally, their majority view may be persuasive, but ought not to be taken as the sum of the will and mind of the Church.

That being the case the request to the American and Canadian branches of Anglicanism may be a request, but it is not an enforceable decision or an imperative.

In my view serious questions need urgently to be asked about the role the Primates' Meeting appears to have arrogated to itself."

Visitors From Finland - Exploring the Porvoo Agreement

February 4 - 7

Bandon Union of Parishes welcomed a delegation of clergy, students and lecturers from the Evangelical-Lutheran Church and Anglican Chaplaincy in Finland from February 4 - 7 2005. The group, led by the Revd Rupert Moreton, Anglican Chaplain in Helsinki (formerly of Dublin Diocese), came to see at first-hand the life and witness of the Church of Ireland as a partner church under the Porvoo Declaration.

Having spent the first part of their trip in Dublin, where most of the programme was 'institutional' in nature (the Theological College, Christ Church Cathedral, Trinity College, Irish School of Ecumenics etc), they were delighted with their stay in Bandon because it gave them a chance to spend time with people 'on the ground' in parish life and gain a deeper understanding of how the Church of Ireland worships and witnesses. Four host families provided accommodation, with the programme balanced between official, tourist, local sights and events.

Most of the day of Saturday February 5 was spent in Cork, with a tour of St Fin Barre's Cathedral given by the Dean, followed by a meeting with the Bishop at the Palace. The Bishop gave an informal talk on the Diocese of Cork and answered questions and then the group viewed the portraits of former bishops before heading off to taste the culinary delights of the city, followed by a visit to the famous Bells at St Anne's Shandon. A meeting of the group and parishioners was held that evening in St Peter's Church, Bandon, and this proved to be a moment of significant engagement and dialogue, with much information and understanding exchanged and experienced.

On Sunday, the group attended Morning Prayer in Ballinadee Church and the Eucharist with Holy Baptism in Bandon. The con-celebration of the Eucharist, alongside the baptism of a child from the growing African membership of the parish, and the participation of members of the delegation, proved to be a wonderful liturgical moment. Following a light lunch in the church, the visitors spent the afternoon touring West Cork and rounded off the day with dinner at the Rectory, when further dialogue was possible in a more relaxed way.

Both the Rector, Revd Nigel Dunne, and Revd Moreton reflected that it is visitations like these that bring to life ecumenical dialogues and agreements, as without them they can remain on dusty shelves in theological libraries and experienced by only a few.

The guests left on the morning of Monday February 7 feeling a very real sense of communion with the parish (as they did with them) and so with the Church of Ireland as a whole.

CORK, CLOYNE & ROSS DIOCESAN YOUTH COUNCIL

GRAVITY II & Inter-Parish Sports

Saturday 15th January was the date of the latest instalment of GRAVITY. This time, the CDYC organised an afternoon of Inter-Parish Sports, held at Ashton School, prior to the evening gathering at St. Fin Barre's Cathedral. Although numbers were modest, the participants (and leaders!) formed teams and competed in several sports during the course of the afternoon. These included basketball, unihockey, indoor soccer and even a little table tennis. It was felt that everyone got to know each other a lot better - with a little help from the competitive spirit. Speaking of which, the sports ended in a fair draw at 6pm.

It was then off to the cathedral where the rest of the event would follow. History was then made when the group tucked in to a stack of delivered pizzas at the back of the cathedral! These were very welcome after all the running around and they disappeared even quicker than they had arrived. The groundbreaking continued with an impromptu quiz in the rear pews, which also went down very well.

GRAVITY II maintained its informal and interactive air during the more spiritual part of the event, which commenced at 8:00pm after gaining several more individuals. Songs and readings were interspersed with interactive games. Dean Burrows then addressed those present with a particular emphasis on risk-taking. Stories from World War I, Cork City at night and the Dean's own childhood – amongst others – illustrated how risks play such big parts in our lives and particularly, in our Christian lives. Further singing and prayers concluded the time of worship and thought before the renowned "Fin's Bar" opened for business, again, in the rear of the cathedral.

Very positive feedback was received from those involved, who took part in what was a very positive experience.

The CDYC are running "SUN-UP", a dawn Eucharist on Easter Morn, the 27th March next. The service will take place on Warren Strand in Rosscarbery. Participants of secondary school age will be invited to stay from early Saturday

evening to Sunday pm. Fun, games, dvd's and sports will be on offer, as well as a cooked breakfast on the strand after the morning service (weather pending)!
