

## March 2006 News Archive.

### **1) Michael Burrows, 2) St. Lukes Home, 3) Templebreedy Organ appeal**

#### **1 Michael Burrows to be Consecrated on 3rd July**

On Friday 31st March The Dean of Cork, The Very Rev'd. Michael Burrows, was elected as the next Bishop of Cashel and Ossory, our neighbouring united dioceses to the North East. He will be the Bishop for a total of six dioceses - Cashel, Waterford, Lismore, Ossory, Leighlin and Ferns - to name them all! It is a massive geographical area covering most of the south-east of Ireland and it almost reaches as far North as the Dublin to Galway road in one place.

Moving from Cork will indeed be leaving home for Michael. Although he grew up in Dublin and received most of his education there, he has spent most of his working life so far in this diocese.

In 1987, after attending the Theological College for three years, Michael became Curate of Douglas Union and he and Claire moved to Cork for the first time then. The Rev'd. Canon Gordon Watts was Rector at the time, but The Ven. Robin Bantry-White, our Archdeacon, later became Rector. The Archdeacon had himself been Michael's Father's curate in Dublin and, fittingly, he will be preaching at Michael's consecration.

Michael had never lived in Cork before coming to Douglas, but he had strong connections in the county as his Mother's family were from West Cork and his Uncle Jerram was Headmaster of Cork Grammar School. Michael remained in Douglas until 1991, when he returned to T.C.D as Chaplain for three years. The lure of Cork remained however and when Michael was offered the opportunity of becoming Rector of Bandon, he took it and the family enjoyed living there enormously from 1994-2002. Michael and Claire are building a retirement home in Bandon for future years.

In 2002 Michael became Dean of Cork and Incumbent of the St. Fin Barre's Union of Parishes. It is extraordinary to note that Michael's immediate two predecessors at St. Fin Barre's Cathedral are now Bishops in the Church of Ireland: The Rt.

Rev'd. Dr. Michael Jackson (who is also a brother-in-law) is now Bishop of Clogher, and The Most Rev'd. Dr. Richard Clarke is now Bishop of Meath and Kildare. Bishop Clarke, incidentally, like Michael Burrows, was also Chaplain of T.C.D. and then Rector of Bandon before his appointment as Dean of Cork. Further patterns of co-incidence in the House of Bishops mean that there will soon be three 'Bishop Michaels', all related, serving as current Bishops in the Church of Ireland, since The Rt. Rev'd. Michael Mayes, Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe, is a second cousin.

Michael and Claire have four children, each born in a different parish. Henry was baptised in Blackrock, Cork, in 1991, Andrew in Trinity College, Dublin in 1994. Gráinne was baptised in Bandon in 1996 and James in St. Fin Barre's Cathedral in 2002.

Michael says that leaving Cork is going to be an awful wrench and an unexpected call. He will miss music in the Cathedral setting, but might perhaps learn to play the organ at his own services again and he will particularly miss the pulpit. Our own Bishop said: "On behalf of us all in the Diocese I congratulate our faithful colleague, the Dean of Cork, on his election as Bishop of Cashel and Ossory. He has served this diocese very faithfully and creatively. We assure him, Claire and their family of our love, practical support and prayers as they prepare for this significant change in their lives."

But gigantic as Michael's new diocese is, the road to Cork is not too long and there are always those occasions when Church of Ireland people 'bubble up' and meet together here or there, and one such occasion is, of course, on its way soon in Dublin.

The United Dioceses of Cashel and Ossory are in the Province of Dublin, so Michael's Consecration as a Bishop will take place in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin on 3rd July. His six enthronements will be at later dates.

## **2 Saint Luke's Home Cork Receives Gift**

**of Land sold at public auction for €27.5 million**

A gift to Saint Luke's Home for the Elderly in Cork from the late Mr Sidney Northridge (a bachelor farmer) of c.11 acres of land on the outskirts of Cork City was sold by the charity yesterday at public auction for €27.5 million.

Following the auction the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Bishop Paul Colton said:

"We are immensely grateful for this magnificent bequest from Sidney Northridge, and on behalf of us all involved in this charity, I dedicate this moment to his memory with thanksgiving.

No doubt many people will marvel at the huge commercial value of the land; of the sums realised at the auction, but we marvel at the generosity of a man who clearly admired and supported the vision of what Saint Luke's Home does and has been doing for the elderly in Cork since 1872.

The gift is most welcome. The Home has incurred huge expense in moving from its different city locations to Blackrock over a period of time and, of course, in building the facility which is regarded by many as a prototype for services for the elderly. What the bequest may enable us to do is to expand the work of the charity into new areas of activity, and the Board will have to look at that. We all know that the demand for services for the elderly is growing as demographics change, people live longer and want to stay in their own homes as long as possible.

Saint Luke's Home is, of course, not only a diocesan project; it is an ecumenical one to which the people of Cork have given generous support over many years. For all of us it is quite simply an expression of the Christian Gospel in action, as we care for the sick and the elderly."

The Home employs 186 staff providing up-to-date care in a modern and comfortable four acre setting overlooking Lough Mahon.

St. Luke's Home was founded in 1872 by Fanny Gregg, the daughter of the then Church of Ireland Bishop. After a series of physical relocations, the charity now operates a modern 120 bed facility in Blackrock, Cork.

Incorporated in the facility is a purpose-built Dementia Unit providing care to thirty residents. Occupancy at the home stands at 99% on average, reflecting the high demand for the facility

### **3 Templebreedy Parish Pipe Organ Appeal**

Thursday 2 March was an important day in the life of Holy Trinity Church, Crosshaven. At a reception in the Port of Cork Boardroom the Bishop officially launched the Templebreedy Parish Pipe Organ Appeal. As readers will be aware Holy Trinity Church, Crosshaven is one of the 'gems' of the diocese and was designed by William Burges and built at the same time as the much larger St Fin

Barre's Cathedral. Holy Trinity Crosshaven was consecrated in 1868. Over the last three years this small parish community has been engaged in a complete restoration and conservation programme. This has involved a lot of fundraising and to date both parishioners and the local community have been extremely generous and supportive. The next stage in the overall restoration programme is the commissioning of a new two manual and pedals mechanical action pipe organ. (As far as we know there has not been a new pipe organ built in this diocese since Christ Church, Innishannon in 1987)

Following a lot of research under the guidance of our Organ Consultant Mark Duley and a tender process the parish has appointed the highly respected Dutch organ builder Henk van Eeken to build their new organ. Because of the architectural significance of our Burges church we have sought to match the level of quality which our predecessors invested in our church. Henk van Eeken is someone of that calibre. Our new organ will take eighteen months to build and work will start this autumn with a delivery date of mid 2008.

An organ is usually the single most expensive item a church will ever purchase. Its life span will -or should be- measured in hundreds of years, and thus it must be built by a highly skilled craftsman, according to methods of proven durability and using materials of the highest quality.

The parish is conscious that as well as there being a huge financial cost in the provision of an organ such as this that there is also a responsibility and indeed privilege attached to such a commission. They have sought therefore to make a contribution to the wider musical scene in Cork and beyond. We are delighted that our project has been enthusiastically endorsed by some of the most eminent musicians in Ireland. They include Prof. Gerard Gillen, NUI Maynooth and Titular Organist St Mary's Pro-Cathedral Dublin, Colin Nicholls Organist St Fin Barre's Cathedral Cork and Lecturer Cork School of Music, Malcolm Proud Lecturer Waterford IT and Organist St Canice's Cathedral Kilkenny, Dr Geoffrey Spratt Director Cork School of Music, Peter Sweeney, Senior lecturer in Organ Dublin IT Conservatory of Music and Drama. We are delighted that the Dutch Ambassador to Ireland and the Irish Ambassador to the Netherlands have both agreed to be patrons of the project along with the Bishop.

We hope that friends across the diocese will feel able to be part of this exciting initiative. There is now an opportunity for people to sponsor one of the 678 pipes in the organ at costs ranging from €20 for the smallest internal pipes (2cms high) to €800 for the largest internal pipe (2.1metres high). There are 25 façade pipes which range from €1000 to €5000. The €5000 pipe which is the largest façade pipe was sold within a few days of the launch! The cheapest pipes are being reserved for children in the local community. Each sponsor will receive a special certificate and will have their name recorded in a special commemorative book. Pipes can be sponsored in memory of loved ones and would make a very nice gift for a loved one...For further information please contact Daniel Nuzum at (021) 483 1236

We hope to give periodic updates about the organ at various stages through the diocesan magazine. In the mean time if you wish to visit the website of the organ builder you can do so at [www.henkvaneecken.com](http://www.henkvaneecken.com)

## **New appointments in the United Dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross**

The Revd Eileen Cremin, who is currently Curate-Assistant of Douglas Union with Frankfield, Cork City, has been appointed Incumbent of Fermoy Union.

Eileen originally came to us from the Diocese of London where she was Priest-in-Charge of Christ Church Brondesbury, a large multi-cultured, multi-racial city parish.

Eileen, who is married to a Cork man, grew up in London. She was educated at the John Howard Girls' Grammar School, Hackney and later at Salisbury and Wells Theological College. She was ordained a Deacon in 1988 and a Priest in 1994.

The Institution of the Revd Eileen Cremin as Incumbent of Fermoy Union is set for Friday 7th July at 8 p.m. in Christ Church, Fermoy.

Sunday 7th May saw the licensing of a new priest, The Revd Denis MacCarthy, who was presented to the Bishop by The Revd Canon Adrian Empey, The Ven. Robin Bantry-White and The Very Revd Michael Burrows. His service of Reception and Licensing took place in St. Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork as part of an afternoon Choral Eucharist.

Denis grew up in Cork, and was educated in the North Presentation and North Monastery Primary schools before attending Edmund Rice College, Dun Laoghaire. In 1980 he entered Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth where he received a Diploma in Philosophy and Arts and a Bachelor of Divinity Degree. Denis was ordained a Deacon by the Archbishop of Dublin in 1985 and was ordained to the priesthood in Christ the King Church, Cork in 1986. Since then he has worked in jobs as wide ranging as a taxi driver and a part-time tutor with Cork City Vocational Education Committee working with disadvantaged young people.

Since returning to ministry, Denis has been serving in Mallow Union to gain some experience and will now be moving to Bandon as curate.

## **New Youth Officer for the Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross**

The Right Reverend Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross has announced the appointment of a new Diocesan Youth Officer for the Diocese. He is Mark Dunwoody who is currently the Youth Director at Saint John and Saint Philip International Church of The Hague in The Netherlands.

Mark Dunwoody has 17 years of youth work experience in Northern Ireland and Europe, including as a youth leader, scout master and leader in outdoor pursuits.

In his current post, Mark has gained extensive experience in understanding young people of different cultures and nationalities. During this time he has been involved with various projects which involve networking with other churches across Europe and Ireland.

Mark also has extensive experience in Reconciliation work and has designed and implemented programmes in Northern Ireland, Poland and Germany; and is currently in the process of setting up a project for the summer 2007 which will involve teenagers from Israel, Palestine, The Netherlands, Belgium and Ireland. He was recently by the South African Embassy (in The Netherlands) to take part in a Symposium to look at how to empower the youth in a post conflict society.

Before coming to Cork to start work here, Mark will lead a group of young adults to Luweero, Uganda to implement a building project in a local school. Meanwhile his wife, Diane will set up a dental hygiene project there and work in a clinic.

Mark says:

“I feel very excited and privileged to be taking up this new role in Cork and am looking forward to building on the great work that the local youth council has been doing. I’ve always been driven by a passion to see young people engage in church life.”

The chairperson of the Diocesan Youth Council - Judy Peters - welcomed the appointment and said:

“This is an exciting new initiative for our diocese and we look forward hugely to welcoming Mark to Cork, Cloyne and Ross and to working with him.”

Mark is married to Diane and they have three sons Gareth, Ricky and Dylan.

**Church of Ireland Ought not respond to Anglican Controversy by Erecting  
Walls of Exclusion**

**Gay people are tantamount to scapegoats in the current Anglican row.**

**No point in next Lambeth conference unless all Bishops are invited.**

“Anglicanism runs the risk of becoming something wholly unattractive and unrecognisable to those who are drawn strongly to its sometimes exasperating breadth, untidiness and inclusiveness,” according to the Right Reverend Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork in his address to the Cork, Cloyne and Ross Diocesan Synod in the Rochestown Park Hotel, on Saturday, 10th June, 2006.

He was referring to the current crisis within Anglicanism and said that any response to the row which resulted in the impetuous erection of

“walls of exclusion on the fuzzy edges of Anglicanism would, to my mind, be a negation of the essence of Anglicanism and also of the Church of Ireland.”

Bishop Colton also said that what he, and he believed many likely him, found attractive about being a member of the Church of Ireland are its breadth and its “smudgy-edged inclusiveness.” “What is inspiring,” he said

“is the fact that people who think so hugely differently about the things of God, can nonetheless belong together within the same church; journey side by side; worship, pray, work and announce the good news together; and discover, in spite of their differences, a friendship in faith that they wouldn’t probably otherwise have.”

Bishop Colton also said that gay people were tantamount to being made scapegoats in the current row:

“...because the presenting issue of the controversy within Anglicanism appears to be human sexuality, one result is that gay people have become scapegoats in what is a more deep-seated constitutional crisis. Therefore, gay people in lay and ordained leadership as well as in voluntary work in our churches, or simply in our pews, or those have been driven away by a sense of rejection, together with gay people in the community outside the Church need to know and to hear our apology. Gay people in the Church have been caught in the middle of a row which is primarily about the way different Anglicans read, approach and understand the holy Scriptures, the Bible. Had it not surfaced on the back of the sexuality debate, this dispute would have emerged sooner or later on an entirely different issue.”

Referring to the planning for the next Lambeth Conference of Bishops, Bishop Colton said that the conference would be “impoverished” and “pointless” unless all Anglican bishops are invited to it and on an equal basis. The conference

“...would also be uselessly compromised if it were to descend to a type of ecclesial and political world cup where resolutions are propounded and fought over; and which supplant discovering that friendship in faith with the trophies of sectional victory: golden cows won and lost and which consolidate or even catalyse division.”

**Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross**

**Diocesan Synod Address given in Cork**

**by The Right Rev. Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross**

**10th June 2006**

### **Introduction**

Dear friends, we meet in the name of God the Holy Trinity, as a pilgrim people, to do the work of the Church in this Diocesan Synod of Cork, Cloyne

and Ross. It is my eighth Diocesan Synod as your Bishop, and the second synod meeting of this triennium.

### **Looking into the Future**

In 1957 the launch of Sputnik electrified the world. Less than a decade after that, in April 1965, the new international satellite telecommunications organization, Intelsat, successfully placed the Early Bird satellite over the Atlantic Ocean. Just in time for the Apollo 11 lunar landing in July 1969, Intelsat completed a sequence of launches that placed satellites in space over each of the three ocean regions. Early Bird had been launched into what is now known worldwide as "the Clarke orbit".

It was so called, because in 1945 the science fiction writer Arthur Clarke had combined the technologies of rocketry, wireless communications, and radar to envision an extra-terrestrial system that relied on orbiting space stations to relay radio signals around the world. That vision is now a reality. It has revolutionised our lives on this globe. It has spurred us on to reach out beyond our own planet and altered our relationships with each other.

More recently, in his science fiction novel - *Time's Out* - Clarke again looks into the future and takes the year 2037 as his reference point. He chose it, he said, because after that date "...earth has run out of history to change..."

Some months ago, a section of the UK Christian Handbook - Religious Trends 5 - caught my eye. They had chosen a similar date: 2040. The researchers from Christian Research, acknowledging the limitations of their science, nonetheless, endeavour to sketch what the church in the U.K. - our near neighbours - might be like by 2040 A.D. Among other things, it is forecast that there by then

- about 50% of the population will have no religion

- there may be a booming cyber-church but that Christian radio will have ceased
- virtually all rural and inner city churches will have closed
- church membership will be under 5% of the population
- house churches will no longer be especially popular
- alpha courses will have been forgotten
- church schools will be less distinctive and will be replaced by multi-faith schools
- there will be fewer church weddings, and very few infant baptisms.

As I said when I wrote about this in the Diocesan Magazine; "I'm not convinced; and how do they know any way?"

As Christian disciples we step into the future putting, to reuse King George VI's memorable quotation of Christmas 1939, "our hand in the hand of God... That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way". Faith risks becoming fatalism, however, if we do not use our rational insights, as we face and plan for the future of our ministry and work. Predicting the future is a vacuous pursuit; envisaging the needs of tomorrow and planning a strategy for our work, is a responsibility: a responsibility we call stewardship. Alongside our core activities of worship, prayer, pastoral care mission and spirituality we need the assistance of modern skills and the very best resources of our time.

For example, from April next year we will begin to know the results compiled from the 1.5 million census forms that we have recently completed and returned.

From our own perspective as a diocese, I announce today that in October I will undertake in the Diocese my second administrative Episcopal Visitation of parishes in the diocese. Not only is the information gathered essential to

our planning for the future, it is also crucial for my overview and our mutual understanding within the diocese.

### **Affirming our Role:**

What will happen in the future? One thing is certain: there will be change. As G.K. Chesterton said

“All conservatism is based upon the idea that if you leave things alone you leave them as they are. But you do not. If you leave a thing alone you leave it to a torrent of change.”

And what is our role as Christians here in Cork, Cloyne and Ross in facing that change?

This is a question I touch on every year, and rightly so, because at this gathering we need to keep our eye on what we are meant to be doing and how we hope to fulfil faithfully our calling.

For me so much hinges on how we understand Baptism. I shared this with you in my pastoral letter read at all Services at the start of this year on the feast of the Baptism of our Lord.

Our baptism is “...the beginning of a journey with God which continues for the rest of our lives, the first step in response to God’s love.” Those words are simple but profound; radical and far-reaching in their consequences if we allow them to shape and change us. In baptism, God calls us from darkness to light. Following Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him. The cross is signed on us with the words: Christ claims you for his own ... Live as a disciple of Christ, fight the good fight, finish the race, and keep the faith. Confess Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and look for his coming in glory.”

This is the future to which God calls us. At every baptism and at every Confirmation I say that at those occasions we are all challenged to reflect again on the meaning of our own baptism. I can think of no better charter for us in Cork, Cloyne and Ross than the words of the Commission which is used at the end of every Confirmation.

Just think of how potent it would be for this diocese if we were all to espouse and to commend to others the espousal of the Commission as our personal and as a diocesan charter:

### **A Christian Charter**

Those who are baptised are called to worship and serve God.

With the help of God:

- We will continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers.
- We will persevere in resisting evil, and whenever we fall into sin, we will repent and return to the Lord.
- We will proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ.
- We will seek and serve Christ in all people, loving our neighbour as ourselves.

I invite individuals and parishes within the diocese to consider adopting this Commission as their personal and communal charter for the way we fulfil our baptismal calling as the people of God; and in our going forth into the future.

### **Anglicanism**

We fulfil this Christian calling in the context of the Church of Ireland, part of the Anglican family. Last year I spoke about that Anglican way and our

exasperating breadth and smudgy-edged inclusiveness – often perplexing and seemingly intangible.

It is stating the obvious to say that all is not well within our Anglican family. It is hard to escape the sense that, in this controversy, those who shout the loudest; or with the greatest determination; or with the most panache are being accorded the open ear of some of the international structures of Anglicanism. These happen also to be Anglicanism's instruments of unity: the Archbishop of Canterbury; the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting. I deliberately omit two of the instruments of unity: the Lambeth Conference of Bishops because it has not met since the most recent spate of controversy began; and the emerging consciousness of Anglican Canon Law is omitted because, although the Primates Meeting and the ACC have acknowledged the possible role of canon law as an instrument of unity, there is by no means universal agreement among the autonomous churches of the Anglican family on this point yet.

Growing up here in Cork in the 1960's and 1970's as a very average member of the Church of Ireland, I would have to say that it was only in my late teens in the context of an emerging sense of vocation that I ever began to have a consciousness of belonging to Anglicanism. Even when I was at school for two years in Canada my experience of the Anglican Church there was nothing like what I was used to here in Douglas.

Remember also, that the centenary of the first Lambeth Conference only took place in 1967. Not only is this institutional and international sense of Anglicanism a very young phenomenon, but the very structures (apart from the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury) which are purportedly attempting to hold the whole precarious thing together, are not only recent in their establishment, but are also evolving in a self-determining, sometimes apparently ad hoc, reactive manner without adequate mandate, I believe,

from the churches themselves.

Growing up, I thought of myself as Church of Ireland, a branch of the Christian Church; and that was that. I find myself wondering whether, in spite of our travels and global encounters, in spite of partners in mission and all of that, whether most ordinary members of the Church of Ireland have moved much beyond a very basic understanding of our place within a wider Anglican ecclesial household.

In other words - and lay people are best placed to tell me - do not most ordinary members of the Church think of themselves as simply being Church of Ireland; albeit with broadly similar, like-minded Christian friends in other parts of the world? (For clergy it is different, our livelihood throws us into the path of such things). And in the case of young Christians I meet, my sense is that they appear to have moved beyond this debate altogether and in the terms they express themselves we recognise post-denominational Christianity.

I also ask myself what it is that I find and have always found attractive, if also frustrating and challenging, about the Church of Ireland. It is exactly those things I mentioned last year in describing the Anglican way: our breadth; our smudgy-edged inclusiveness. What is inspiring is the fact that people who think so hugely differently about the things of God, can nonetheless belong together within the same church; journey side by side; worship, pray, work and announce the good news together; and discover across their differences a friendship in faith that they wouldn't probably otherwise have. Because of the present row which purports to be about human sexuality, Anglicanism runs the risk of becoming something wholly unattractive and unrecognisable to those who are drawn strongly to its sometimes exasperating breadth, untidiness and inclusiveness.

I remind you of that quotation of William Countryman:

“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.”

In my view, any proposal for a way forward which undermines our inclusiveness or comprehensiveness ought to be subjected to rigorous and autonomous scrutiny. In the Church of Ireland, we must be careful not to jettison either our independence or autonomy on the one hand; or the friendship of faith we have nurtured already across significant differences. We do away such things at our peril. Impetuously erecting walls of exclusion on the fuzzy edges of Anglicanism would, to my mind, be a negation of the essence of Anglicanism and of the Church of Ireland itself.

And because the presenting issue of the controversy within Anglicanism appears to be human sexuality, one result is that gay people have become scapegoats in what is a more deep-seated constitutional crisis. Therefore, gay people in lay and ordained leadership as well as in voluntary work in our churches, or simply in our pews, or those who have been driven away by a sense of rejection, together with gay people in the community outside the church, need to know and to hear our apology. Gay people in the Church have been caught in the middle of a row which is not about them and their sexuality, but which instead is primarily about the way different Anglicans read, approach and understand the Holy Scriptures, the Bible. Had it not surfaced on the back of the sexuality debate, this dispute would have emerged sooner or later on an entirely different issue.

Ironically, a person's strongest point is frequently also their weakest. So it is

with institutions. I, and I believe many others like me, are attracted to the disparate untidiness of Anglicanism: its comprehensive inclusiveness. Wide open arms that seem to stretch inconceivably far, drawing many in, and providing shade and shelter for the most unlikely fellow-pilgrims. This has always been my experience of the Church of Ireland. I believe we jeopardise or jettison this at our peril.

At the same time it would be naïve not to acknowledge the challenging and uncomfortable diversity of approach to reading and interpreting and shaping our faith on the scriptures.

### **Understanding the Scriptures**

Hard work lies ahead for us as members of the Church of Ireland if we are to build on what we value as an, albeit transient and ephemeral, institutional framework in which we pursue our Christian vocation and pilgrimage. Let me read for you some of the core statements members of our church make about the scriptures:

· In the Preamble and Declaration to the Constitution of the Church of Ireland we say that we "... accept and unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as given by inspiration of God, and containing all things necessary to salvation..."

· At their ordination deacons, priests and bishops promise that they believe and accept the Holy Scriptures as revealing all things necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

The reality is that those who make those vows have, nonetheless, disparate approaches to and understandings of the same texts around which they gather; but around which they do gather for prayer and worship – that friendship of faith. In that context the recently published report of the Church

of Ireland Bishops' Advisory Committee on Doctrine – The Authority of Scripture – is a hugely welcome contribution. The fact that this was the first topic assigned to the committee is indicative of the importance of the subject.

### **Lambeth Conference**

Planning is also under way for the next Lambeth Conference of bishops which is to be held in 2008: not long now – two summers away. I hope that the planners of that conference and that the Archbishop of Canterbury (who issues the invitation) will invite all Anglican bishops of the time and of all outlooks to that three week encounter as equal participants; otherwise it would be pointless.

I have never been to a Lambeth Conference, having been elected six months or so after the last one. However, what I want from that meeting is for it to be nothing other than a place of encounter and pilgrimage. To that end it would be impossibly impoverished unless all are invited in parity. Moreover, it would be uselessly compromised if it were to descend to a type of ecclesial and political world cup where resolutions are propounded and fought over; and which supplant discovering that friendship in faith with the trophies of sectional victory: golden cows won and lost and which consolidate or even catalyse division.

### **Further Synod Reorganisation**

Last year this Synod approved fairly radical changes to its way of doing business. Hopefully, over time, the benefit will be seen. This year two further changes, on my suggestion, have been agreed by Diocesan Council, and are now being proposed to you. First, I have always been puzzled why we have thought it necessary to have different honorary secretaries here at Diocesan Synod from those at Diocesan Council. The Diocesan Council carries forward the work of the synod; and just as the honorary secretaries of the General Synod are also the honorary secretaries of its continuing body – the Standing

Committee – this proposal would replicate that here. From my perspective it will also provide greater and easier coordination of the relevant work between the two bodies; and possibly create a more meaningful role for the secretaries in question.

Secondly, I believe (and knowing the reliance a bishop, and indeed a whole diocese, places on the Archdeacon) that it would be hugely difficult to do the work of either the Synod or the Council unless the Archdeacon were a member of the Diocesan Council. The second proposal, therefore, is that the Archdeacon be ex officio on Diocesan Council as a clerical secretary. Another outcome of that resolution is that the Bishop will forego his or her right to nominate one of the clerical secretaries; which is mitigated, in any event, by the fact that the Archdeacon is the Bishop's appointee.

I hope you will feel able to give these changes your support.

### **Bishop's Courses**

A keynote in these presidential addresses each year is the challenge of equipping people for ministry. This year I am delighted to announce that the Bishop's Course in Pastoral Work will commence next September. We are grateful to the Priorities' Fund for its support. Recently applicants for the course went through a selection process and the first members of the course have been identified. The two year course will include reflective preparation for ministry; development of core skills in pastoral ministry as well as fieldwork. I thank everyone associated with devising this course on my behalf and most especially the new Diocesan Healing and Pastoral Care Committee.

The Bishop's Course in Theology is in its third cycle and we look forward to the graduation of those participants early next year.

### **Diocesan Readers**

Last year I undertook ministerial review with the Diocesan Readers in the diocese. We are all conscious of our reliance on the Diocesan Readers, and most especially on a small number of them who accept so much responsibility in presiding at worship throughout the diocese. I look forward, in the autumn, to commissioning another group of readers. In thanking them I want to commend this ministry to other people in the Diocese. Why should the Reader who takes your services and helps to sustain the pattern of worship you are used to come from someone else's parish? Indeed, why should it be someone else? Why might it not be you God is calling to this ministry? We do need more Diocesan Readers.

### **Ordinands**

I thank God also that he is calling people to reflect upon the possibility of ordained ministry. At the moment we have four ordinands in the diocese. Two who are embarking on their training for ordination: Adrian Moran and Anne Skuse. On 23rd June, now that they have successfully completed their course I look forward to ordaining as deacons: Paula Geary and Walter Hill. May God be with you as you prepare for this momentous day!

But this also begs questions. Why should your priest always be someone provided by some other parish in the Church? If God calls people in other parishes to be ordained; is it not possible that he is also calling someone in your parish, or even you yourself?

### **Lapp's Charity**

One of our charities in the Diocese celebrates a momentous anniversary this year. It will be the 150th anniversary of the Lapp's Charity on 1st December next. We remember William Lapp with thanksgiving. He died in 1833. He bequeathed some of his property to the Bishop of Cork and to the rectors of Cork city parishes, "upon trust to establish a charity for the relief of such aged and infirm persons being Protestants of any description and natives of Cork'

...

It took some years for the funds to build up but by 1856 the trustees had succeeded in leasing Castle White - a large four storey house, situated between College Road and Western Road. It had a large garden area around it and lodges on both the College Road and Western Road entrances. In the following year, 1857, 12 people moved in (3 men and 9 women) to the building, together with a matron. A physician and chaplain to the asylum were appointed from 1863/64.

But that's just enough to tantalize you about this very interesting and blessed story: Dr Alicia St Leger is currently writing the history of the charity for the trustees and we look forward to its publication and the Service of Thanksgiving on 1st December in St Fin Barre's Cathedral.

### **Saint Luke's Home**

Speaking of thanksgiving, the Diocesan Synod is the right and proper place to acknowledge with immense gratitude our indebtedness to the late Mr Sidney Northridge for his gift of two sites on the Kinsale Road to another charity within the diocese: Saint Luke's Home Charity. The sites were sold at public auction in early March for €27.5 million.

As I said on the day, to many people this was a story of land values. To us, however, it was the story of a Christian gentleman who caught a vision of the goals of the charity and its ethos; supported it; and also, in time, benefited from it himself.

The Board of Directors of the Charity is conscious of the huge benefit it is receiving; and also of the fact that all charities in a city like Cork draw from a limited pool of disposable income. Therefore, we have decided not to go ahead this year with flag days, the annual fair and many of the smaller fund-

raising activities. On behalf of all who are associated with the charity I wish today to acknowledge the work of all our supporters, benefactors and fund-raisers (many of them from the parishes throughout the diocese), and to thank them for keeping everything going in very challenging and sometimes uncertain days. We now face a new challenge of keeping connected with those who are supportive of the work of the Home and making sure that its financial security does not cause social isolation.

### **Singling out for thanks**

Each year I single out a different group within the diocese for singular thanks. This year, for a variety of reasons, my role, together with Ken Hastie and Fred Treacy, as one of the Diocesan Treasurers, has come to the fore. The people I ask you to salute this year are the treasurers in the parishes. They are a blessing – pennies from heaven! Theirs is a huge job, and I know that you would want them to know and to hear that what they do is greatly appreciated.

### **Finance**

This year the Diocesan Council and its Finance Committee spent considerable time discussing the subject of finance within the diocese. As I've said, in this diocese, the Bishop is one of the three Diocesan Treasurers.

Some think that odd. I do not. Money is not a dirty subject and it is not non-spiritual. Our Lord and indeed the Scriptures have plenty to say about wealth and possessions in both spiritual and practical terms. Too often in parts of the Church of Ireland we adopt such a genteel disdain for matters financial that planning for our work is based on anecdote rather than analysis; and as a result we fail, as a result, to facilitate the ministry and witness of the Gospel through us.

Last year as we discussed structures, I outlined our constitutional pattern

within this episcopal church of ours. In particular I referred to the place and role of the Diocesan Synod within that representative framework.

This year, I decided, on behalf of the three Diocesan Treasurers, to look in detail at the financing of our work. In this connection you will see included in your book of reports the text of a leaflet which we prepared entitled Understanding our Finances..

One all too prevalent myth that needs to be exploded first, however, relates to money held by the Representative Church Body: "They have loads of money why don't they give it to us?" Let me put it this way. The RCB is a trustee body. In the main the money they have, if it is not your parish's – held or invested, as it were, like a bank holds lots of people's money in an account for them – then it is someone else's money. Like a bank, the RCB cannot give other people your money and it cannot give you theirs. This is so fundamental, yet it is so widely misunderstood or misconstrued.

The second fundamental I want to share is modelled on the exchange of rings at a marriage: "... All that I have I share with you...." Being part of the diocese here is being part of a family. We are connected to each other in common ministry and mission; one of the symbols of that unity is that you share me as your bishop; a unity expressed when in the several parishes you pray for me each Sunday at church. Both at diocesan level, and between the various parish units in our union or groups of parishes we need to cultivate this strong sense of being joined together and, for the common good of the task the Gospel challenges us to do, we need to have this sense of mutuality and sharing. It is not them and us: ours and theirs. That is a symptom of a house divided against itself: something which again we are warned about.

All of us in the Church need to realise that each one of us has something to offer back to the God who has blessed us. We make that offering through time

and talent as well as through money. I say unashamedly that money is essential to our ministry and work.

### **As the Book of Common Prayer challenges us all**

“Members of the Church should give generously, regularly and proportionately towards the ministry and mission of the Church, and to works of charity.”

Another key point not always understood concerns the assessments on parishes. Some people in parishes think of this as a tax – money that is taken away from them for which they see little in return. In fact, if you look at last year, 98% of the amount that came in to the diocese from assessments on parishes was spent on ministry or elements of it. The remaining 2% - a tiny percentage by most standards – was spent on diocesan administration, which, as all of us knows who deal with the diocesan office is, in itself, a ministry also.

In recent weeks I have spent many days analysing the parochial accounts returned to the diocese in respect of the year 2004; and trying to gain that overview which a Bishop as episcopus – overseer – should have within the diocese. Planning on the basis of anecdote, generalisation or subjective perception is unsatisfactory and unreliable: facts are needed alongside empirical observation.

How much income did all the parishes have in 2004? €3.1 million

Where did the parishes get their money?

Christian Stewardship 19.5%

Collections: General 10%

Collections: Special 3%

Sustentation 10%

Donations 6.3%

Investment income 12.5%

Interest .1%

Rents and graves 3.9%

Fundraising 4.3%

Miscellaneous 7.9%

Tax Rebate 2.5%

Special/Grants 20%

Some quick observations, from my perspective:

1. Again, I say, I am astonished and humbled by the work our treasurers do.
2. I am humbled by the generosity of our people
3. I am surprised by the fund-raising amount. If you had asked me to guess I would have been afraid that we were more dependent than we ought to be on fund-raising.
4. Our total income from direct giving is about 32% of our income. I believe this is the figure on the income side that we need to watch. It is the best indicator of the extent to which the members of the church are themselves shouldering the responsibility for the work of the church.
5. Our investment income accounts for nearly 13%. This shows us how indebted we are to those who have gone before us, or who in earlier times made wise decisions that we are benefiting from now. It also raises the question what will we put in our time that others in the future will thank us for?
6. One thing which worried me is the rental income. It looks on the low side

and I wonder whether some places are getting the rent that they might be getting for their properties.

7. You will see that 20% of the income is from grants. Most of this came in for particular projects and the monies were used for the relevant projects.

Turning to the expenditure side:

In 2004 the parishes of the diocese spent €2.92m

Here is the breakdown:

Assessment 38.5%

Priorities Fund .7%

Administration and salaries 3%

Maintenance – Churches 12.5%

Maintenance – Glebe 6.9%

Church Music 1.8%

Insurance 6.7%

Light and Heat 3%

Youth/Education etc .5%

Liturgical requisites .9%

Charity 5.4%

Bank Charges .3%

Sundries 5.7%

Other Buildings .8%

Special Projects 12.9%

Fees .4%

**Summarised as follows:**

Ministry 38.5%

Administration 3%

Priorities .7%

Church Music 1.8%

Youth Education .5%

Liturgical Requisites .9%

Charity 5.4%

Bank Charges and Fees .7%

Sundries 5.7%

Buildings 42.8%

So, just to finish off analysis about finance - some quick observations, about expenditure:

1. It is right that Ministry should be a principal item.
2. It is right that we care for the heritage buildings that we have.
3. But - have we got the balance right between the building costs and what we are investing in ministry? And by ministry I include worship, pastoral care, mission, outreach, community support and spirituality. I believe that on the expenditure side this is the main thing we need to watch. Have we got the balance right? And, if not, what can we do about it?
4. The two worries I have on this side are:
  - a. our investment in youth and youth education work/resources. We are investing very little here and yet when you listen to conversation around the diocese one of the main concerns is our young people within the church. Huge time is going in through voluntary work of youth leaders, but are we resourcing them and backing them up.?
  - b. I've no doubt that many of our organists are voluntary; but given that the amount for Church music - 1.8% of our expenditure - is mostly accounted for by expenditure on organs rather than organists; I wonder whether we are giving all the organists we do pay a fair deal? No doubt some parishes do pay fairly, but what about the others? And music is so important: it has the potential to enliven or to kill worship.

Here is a further thought in relation to the demand our beautiful buildings place on us: a quick survey of all the parishes of the diocese in recent days tells me that currently they anticipate building projects totalling just over €4 million. In addition projects that involve an €76,000 commitment to new

people based/ministry projects are envisaged. But look at the balance – or rather imbalance!

If we are to grow we need to invest most of all in ministry – the work the people of the Church do.

By the end of 2004 the parishes of the diocese had €1,651,347 in the bank.

### **Tax Relief**

I don't believe that we as a charity are making adequate use of the money that is there, waiting to be claimed back, under the relevant tax scheme. According to the figures I have seen – and I am conscious that I may only be seeing from parish accounts the effects of the return of the PAYE element of the tax - one parish in the diocese is increasing its direct giving by almost 30% in this way; another by 16%; and one of the smallest by 11%.

I do urge diocesan synod members to pass the word around about this scheme, and actively to promote it throughout the church. Here is not the place to explain the nuts and bolts of the scheme. There are leaflets and people throughout the diocese who can do that. But it is simple. If you are a tax payer who gives €250 a year or more to the Church you can make your tax work for your church. This applies to both PAYE and self-employed workers.

If you are self-employed, what you are asked to do when you are thinking about how much you will give to the work of the Church is to take into account the fact that you can include that total amount on your tax return and receive the tax back, and to increase your giving accordingly.

At the moment it would appear, from the figures we have that only 8.6% of our direct giving comes back through this scheme. It is a free scheme and we

are mugs not to be making enough use of it.

I turn now to people in the diocese.

## **People**

Ruby Veitch has been Assistant Secretary at the Diocesan Office since 1980: the same year Wilfred Baker was appointed Diocesan Secretary. She has given twenty-five years of faithful service. In many ways she has been an institution and the first point of contact to the Diocese for the telephone caller or visitor to the Diocesan Office. In all this she has shown perseverance and faithfulness. Not only has she adapted to new technology, she has worked with three different bishops: Bishop Poyntz, Bishop Warke and now myself. We say a heartfelt “thank you” to her once again; but most especially because of her on-going illness we assure her of our on-going love, thoughts and prayers.

Last year I thanked Sybil Fuller for her work as Diocesan Communications Officer. This year I welcome her successor – Sam Wynn – and wish her every blessing. The Reverend Andrew McCroskery has taken on the role of Diocesan Liturgical Officer. Andrew Coleman has taken on the role of Bishop’s Appeal Representative.

Our Diocesan Registrar’s secretary - Jean Wade – retired during the year and although Jean was not our employee, nonetheless the work she has done for the church in the diocese, for our special events with legal documentary backup and for couples planning their wedding day, has been immense, and we thank her.

Our good wishes for retirement and thanks go to Mr Charles Payne at Ashton School: a formative influence on so many children of the diocese, and we wish

every blessing to his successor Mr Bertie Smith and to the new Deputy Principal, Ms Anne-Marie Hewison. I also acknowledge the faithful long service of two deputy principals in our Primary Schools as they prepare for retirement: Mrs Norma Whittaker in Douglas and Mrs Lorna Cooper in Bandonbridge.

As we think of the Church beyond this diocese we keep in our prayers the Archbishop of Armagh and indeed the Church itself now that he has announced his intention to retire at the end of this year, but this is really a subject for next year's Synod.

### **Deployments**

In March, sadly having suffered the death of her husband Jim, the Reverend Kate Gibson resigned the incumbency of Fermoy Union and returned, with our love and thanks, to her home in Scotland. During the year we welcomed the Reverend Bruce Pierce who came back to Ireland from Canada, and as he was setting up home in the Diocese I was happy to licence him to minister among us. It is a great pleasure to have the Reverend Ruth Jackson among us working in Carrigrohane Union, predominantly in outreach ministry in Blarney. In May we welcomed the Reverend Denis MacCarthy into our ministry team and licensed him to serve as curate assistant in Bandon Union. We congratulate the Reverend Eileen Cremin on her recent appointment as Incumbent of Fermoy Union.

### **Bishop Designate of Cashel and Ossory**

When we reflect on the fact that ten of the twelve bishops of the Church of Ireland either have Cork connections or have ministered here; or when we observe that he is the third successive Dean to be elected a Bishop; we give insufficient recognition to the immense giftedness and faithfulness of the Very Reverend Michael Burrows. We must not allow the cumulative episcopal effect to diminish the very significant personal achievement and recognition

being accorded to Michael. We thank him for his creative and energetic faithfulness in many guises in this diocese; and we wish him every blessing as he moves from here towards the north east in order to care for and lead those in south east.

### **R.I.P**

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

- The Reverend David J.P. Llewellyn
- The Very Reverend Frederick M.K. Johnston

May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

### **Review of Year**

I count it an immense privilege to be your Bishop. I particularly enjoy being out and about in the diocese such as at Confirmation Services. The young people of the Church give me great hope. I am inspired also by the courageous initiatives being taken in so many parishes: the handing over of Saint Mary's Collegiate Church in Youghal to the Town Council; the children's choir and proposed new organ for Templebreedy; Some personal highlights for me included the annual courtesy visit of the Lord Mayor; some summer visits to the enterprising fetes of West Cork; an invitation to preach at the Service marking the start of the Law Term; a second invitation to deliver a paper at the European Consortium for Church and State Research, meeting on this occasion in Sweden; the inauguration of the Clerks Choral at St Mary's Collegiate Church in Youghal; the thanksgiving Service for the Restoration of Ross Cathedral; and the completion of a part-time course at Cardiff University.

## **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 liturgical officer; our Diocesan Webmaster; our Diocesan Architect, Bill Brady; our Diocesan Registrar, our Chancellor, Mr Lyndon MacCann; Ms 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; 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.

## **Crozier**

In this week of Diocesan Synod I have just had returned to me from London, by the silversmiths, what they call this unique crozier and a fine example of the English silversmith's craft; hallmarked – London, 1921. It is not, however, a mere artefact. It is a symbol of the calling I have as bishop among you and of our journey together.

Thankful for our fellowship together in the Gospel and mindful of the responsibility entrusted to us let us turn now to the business of our Synod for the good of Christ and part of his Church here in Cork, Cloyne and Ross.

**+Paul Cork:**

**10th June, 2006**

**General Synod of the Church of Ireland**

**Armagh, 9th - 11th May, 2006**

**Resolution 3 (concerning Suicide)**  
**(seeking permission for the introduction in 2007 of a Special Bill)**

**Proposal Speech by the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross**  
**The Right Reverend Paul Colton**

Your Grace

The impetus for this resolution stems from my association with the National Suicide Research Foundation as one of its directors. The Foundation consists of a multi-disciplinary team and is recognised by the Department of Health and Children as an official research unit to contribute to the prevention of suicidal behaviour in Ireland.

Concerning statistics, the American novelist Paul Brodeur rightly cautioned that "statistics are human beings with the tears wiped off".

In 2003 in the Republic of Ireland, there were 497 suicide deaths. This compared to 308 road traffic accident deaths in the same year: in other words approximately 60% more deaths by suicide than by road traffic accident. Furthermore, in 2003 suicide was the leading cause of death in men aged 15 to 44 years.

In this forum we don't need statistics. I've no doubt that no one here - whether among our own families or friends or in pastoral ministry - has not encountered the tragedy of suicide.

My first reason for seeking your permission to propose a Bill next year arises principally from pastoral concern for the bereaved family following a suicide. Our understanding of suicide will never be complete. The bereaved are

invariably left with many questions, most of all "why?" This canon, if it were ever invoked following a suicide, would do nothing to nurture hope in the bereaved. On the contrary if no burial service or only a truncated one were to be offered, hope may be decimated, subjecting the bereaved to further anguish and suffering. They would suffer, not the deceased, who has been entrusted to the keeping of God.

My second reason is that our world view has changed. Gone are the days, when according to the ancient law suicides were buried at cross-roads with a stake driven through the heart, to prevent vampirism - a barbarous practice only prohibited in the U.K since 1882. The Christian perspective was shaped in large measure by medieval canon law. But we now have to hand modern multi-disciplinary developments in understanding suicide from the perspective, for example, of psychiatry, psychology, sociology, and epidemiology.

Third, the concept of *Felo-de se* - felon of himself - has been removed from the statute book. It is not a crime and, therefore, it cannot be committed, in that sense. Suicide was decriminalised in England and Wales in 1961, 1966 in Northern Ireland and in Ireland in 1993. As it stands, the wording of Canon 32 doesn't reflect the fact that suicide has been decriminalised.

Moreover, and fourthly, the terse use of "committed suicide" in contrast say, to canon B38 (2) of the Church of England doesn't accurately reflect the nuanced legal distinctions between those of sound and unsound mind embodied in the state law in which this approach had gestated.

Fifth, in spite of its long provenance in canon law, suicide was not explicitly included among the exceptions listed in the Canons of 1603, 1635 or, indeed, our Church of Ireland Canons of 1871, 1879, 1889, 1899, 1909, 1926, 1934, 1946, or 1960. My understanding is that it was added in 1974 in order to make the

canon consonant with the rubric at the start of the Burial Service in the then Book of Common Prayer. However, in 2002 you, the General Synod, already voted to delete that rubric. It is interesting to note that not long after we put suicide in for the first time, the canon law of the Roman Catholic Church was amended in 1983 to remove it. .

The denial of a Church funeral to one of its members is an extremely sensitive issue. My bill would seek the removal of the words "or had committed suicide" from the list of exceptions. In doing so, I believe a balance is not jeopardised between, on the one hand, a necessary discipline, and, on the other, a true understanding of the mercy of God, revealed principally in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Finally, we should observe that the Funeral Service outlines succinctly what its purpose is:

- to remember the person who has died before God
- to give thanks for his or her life
- to leave him or her in the keeping of God - creator, redeemer and judge
- to commit the body for burial or cremation
- to comfort one another in our grief
- and all in the context of Christian hope

I hope that as a pastoral church, for the reasons I have given, we would want and never not want to do all of those things following a death by suicide, and therefore, I propose

in accordance with the provisions of section 26 (1) of Chapter 1 of the Constitution, leave be given for the introduction of a bill in the General Synod of 2007 in the following terms:

Whereas it is desirable to amend in Chapter IX of the Constitution the provision of the Canon 32 (2) of the said Canons concerning the burial of the dead by omitting suicide from the exceptions listed in the said Canon 32 (2);

Be it enacted by the Archbishops and Bishops and by the Clergy and Laity of the Church of Ireland in General Synod assembled in Kilkenny in the year 2007, and by authority of the same as follows:

1. In this Statute Chapter IX means Chapter IX of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland.
2. in Chapter IX in Canon 32 (2) the words 'or had committed suicide' shall be deleted.

**New Youth Officer for the  
Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross**

The Right Reverend Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross has announced the appointment of a new Diocesan Youth Officer for the Diocese. He is Mark Dunwoody who is currently the Youth Director at Saint John and Saint Philip International Church of The Hague in The Netherlands.

Mark Dunwoody has 17 years of youth work experience in Northern Ireland and Europe, including as a youth leader, scout master and leader in outdoor pursuits.

In his current post, Mark has gained extensive experience in understanding young people of different cultures and nationalities. During this time he has been involved with various projects which involve networking with other churches across Europe and Ireland.

Mark also has extensive experience in Reconciliation work and has designed and implemented programmes in Northern Ireland, Poland and Germany; and is currently in the process of setting up a project for the summer 2007 which will involve teenagers from Israel, Palestine, The Netherlands, Belgium and Ireland. He was recently by the South African Embassy (in The Netherlands) to take part in a Symposium to look at how to empower the youth in a post conflict society.

Before coming to Cork to start work here, Mark will lead a group of young adults to Luweero, Uganda to implement a building project in a local school.

Meanwhile his wife, Diane will set up a dental hygiene project there and work in a clinic.

Mark says:

“I feel very excited and privileged to be taking up this new role in Cork and am looking forward to building on the great work that the local youth council has been doing. I’ve always been driven by a passion to see young people engage in church life.”

The chairperson of the Diocesan Youth Council - Judy Peters - welcomed the appointment and said:

“This is an exciting new initiative for our diocese and we look forward hugely to welcoming Mark to Cork, Cloyne and Ross and to working with him.”

Mark is married to Diane and they have three sons Gareth, Ricky and Dylan.

**CHURCH OF IRELAND - DIOCESE OF CORK, CLOYNE AND  
ROSS**

**PRESS RELEASE**

Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2006

**CHURCH OF IRELAND BISHOP OF CORK CALLS FOR  
GREATER STATE SUPPORT FOR IRISH CHARITIES**

**NEW LEGAL STATUS FOR CHARITIES MUST NOT DETER VOLUNTARY  
WORK**

**EXEMPTION FROM VAT ON CERTAIN CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES IS  
NEEDED – SUPPORT FOR IRISH CHARITIES’ TAX REFORM GROUP  
RECENT CALL FOR REFORM**

**Bishop Paul Colton, Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork, called today for the Government to do even more than it is already doing for Irish charities. In particular, he supported the recent submission by the Irish Charities’ Tax Reform Group that certain charities and charitable activities should be exempt from payment of V.A.T. Bishop Colton was speaking at the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of one of Cork’s famous and established charities – Lapp’s Charity – of which he is chairperson, and which for 150 years has been providing residential housing for the elderly of Cork.**

Bishop Colton said:

“The social fabric of modern Ireland still depends on voluntary charity work.”

“That is no surprise: the State cannot do everything for its people, so charities, community initiative and communal self-help will always be needed. However, charities should receive a just and commensurate contribution for their contribution to the social welfare of our society. It is disrespectful and unjust that some charities are demeaned by having to lobby to secure the funding from the State to provide the State with what are, in fact, essential services, and without which society would be in disarray.”

“In my experience as Chairperson of this charity and of about eleven other charities, while things have improved enormously because of the generally buoyant economic climate, the State could be doing a lot more than it is doing. The promise of a transparent and designated legal structure for charities is a good thing, but new regulations must not become an inhibiting deterrent to charitable activity and voluntary involvement. While many tax exemptions and opportunities do currently apply generously to charities one more would make a significant difference: exemption from VAT for certain charitable activities such as the costs of building new social housing; care of those with special needs; healthcare provision and purchase of medical equipment by charities; care for the

elderly and homeless; and, also the preservation of the country's heritage, such as restoration works on listed Church buildings.”

“The fact of the matter is that this and other exemptions like it already apply elsewhere, in some other European countries: e.g. United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Spain, Finland, Italy, Portugal, Hungary, Denmark and Slovakia. Why not here?”

**- Ends -**

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**CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CORK AND ROSS  
CHURCH OF IRELAND - DIOCESE OF CORK, CLOYNE AND  
ROSS**

**JOINT PRESS RELEASE**

Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2006

**JOINT CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE TWO BISHOPS  
OF CORK**

**BISHOP JOHN BUCKLEY AND BISHOP PAUL COLTON**

**THE FIRST STEP IN CONFRONTING VIOLENCE IN SOCIETY  
IS A RENEWED RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN  
PERSON**

At Christmas we celebrate the coming on earth of Jesus Christ - the greatest event in the history of the world. After thousands of years, Jesus Christ is still the centre of the human race, the joy of every heart and the answer to all our expectations.

God loved us so much that He sent his only Son, who lived among us, sharing our human experience, enriching us and giving dignity to the human person. Jesus reveals to us that we are all God's children. His unique gift is love for each and every one of us.

Each and every human being is precious in God's eyes. In the words of St. Augustine: "He has made us for himself and our hearts will not rest until they rest in Him".

Sadly, today, lack of respect for the dignity of every human person is present in our society and is the cause of much of the violence: in our country, in our streets and in some of our homes. This is a source of deep concern. It is destroying the lives, dignity and hopes of many families. A renewed and conscious respect for the dignity of each and every human person is the starting point for confronting this violence. That dignity underpins the need to respect human life in all its strengths and in all its frailties.

As we celebrate this Christmas season of goodwill towards all, we urge people to promote the dignity of each person as fundamental to all our living. Respect for this dignity has to be seen in our homes, places of work, wherever we meet, mingle and share in the varying relationships

that make up our daily lives. The Good News of Jesus Christ gives us great hope, courage and strength to live as the Lord has called us to live.

Pray with us to the Prince of Peace at this time for a renewed appreciation of the great gift of our human dignity given to us by the coming of Jesus Christ.

ENDS

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**Sermon preached by  
The Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross  
The Right Reverend Paul Colton  
in Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork  
on Christmas Day, 2006**

I look around and I see many of you who made it home for Christmas. No doubt, like me, a good number of you spent some hours wondering whether or not you would get home due to the weather. I started writing this Christmas Sermon during my 13 hours sitting around Heathrow Airport last Wednesday: fogbound. There, that day, and, according to news reports, in the days since, it seemed that the whole world was on the move – or not on the move as the case may be due to delayed and cancelled flights.

Every nationality, every race and culture, every style of dress and many manifestations of religious allegiance and personal expression appeared to walk past in those hours of waiting.

This was an uncomfortable, contemporary, mid-winter journey towards home.

The poet Emily Dickinson said “Where thou art, that is Home.” In all our own family wanderings this is something that we, ourselves, have discovered to be true: where we are - is home: otherwise you never settle in. Dickinson's is a better line than the cynicism of George Bernard Shaw who said that “The great advantage of a hotel is that it is a refuge from home life!”

Christmas is a time for going home. It was ever thus.

“In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.” (Luke 2)

They were heading home - home to the ancestral city of Joseph. Yet it was not their home place – they lived in the town of Nazareth. That experience could be that of so many of you today: home for Christmas; yet home is there – it's somewhere else – as well.

At a deeper philosophical level going home, finding our own place, and rooting ourselves is a religious and spiritual quest – a pilgrimage. Making home and finding home is deeply instinctive: physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Today there is a restlessness about so much of our living, some of it inevitable and more of it the product of our times. Many people are increasingly dislocated from the things of faith; their spiritual home. I have a sense that in the very good economic times and all the infrastructural improvements of our day our society also is restlessly searching for a new spiritual equilibrium. We see this in recent debates about the age of consent; about care for the elderly; about the infrastructure of our health service and so much more. The new religiously diverse Ireland will present its own challenges that are gestating among us and which we have not yet begun adequately to address. Underlying these issues are philosophical, spiritual and moral dilemmas. And these complex concerns require dialogue, engagement and mature reflection in a pluralist Ireland.

This process will not be assisted, on the one hand, by a naïve demonisation of popular culture or, on the other, by an equally naïve call to retreat to the religiosity of a bygone era. Our Irish Constitution expresses the view that we are a religious people; a perspective borne out by the last census. What the current one will show remains to be seen. Either way, religion in the modern Ireland has to engage with contemporary realities rationally, thoughtfully, openly and compassionately – modelled on the outpouring of love, incarnate in that manger on that first Christmas.

Much as we would like it to be otherwise, there is an unavoidable relativism and subjectivity about so much of our living and in our facing of dilemmas.

But it does seem to me also that an existential angst which flits and wanders between choice, freedom, anxiety and dread is no resting place for us as individuals or for our society. Of course there is an absurdity, chaos, uncertainty and inconsistency about much that is inescapably human and indeed about the deal we get. The Christmas and the Christian message is that there is more: home is somewhere.

The restless, spiritual homelessness I'm speaking about was always there. It's nothing new. As Saint John said so poetically in today's timeless Christmas Gospel: "[The light] was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him."

So the question remains for us as much this Christmas as ever: where is home?

Where is home for you or for our society in the midst of our own wanderings and searchings?

When the pendulums in our life or our times stop swinging vigorously where do they come to rest spiritually and philosophically for us?

When the whims and oscillations of the day stop driving us and swaying us, where do we find balance and a new equilibrium?

To what and to whom do we turn when we turn for home?

To where do we look for our reference points and landmarks for that journey?

For us as Christians we turn to God who, as Saint John said

- is the beginning
- the Word – the *logos* - the soul of the universe
- the light of the world
- a light no darkness can put out
- the one who gives us power to become children of God
- the one who, for a while, came where we are, entering the world of life and struggle
- the one who is grace – the one who gives us joy
- the one who is truth - reliability

This is where we as Christians find home; and this is what we celebrate. And it's not easy because for all of us – young and old – there are many attractions masquerading as bright stars on the horizon tantalising us into following them and hoping that we will commit to their trajectory.

Christmas, however, invites us to follow the one bright star who leads us home to himself: Jesus, the baby in the manger, Emmanuel, God with us.

Therefore, home for us as Christians is

- on our knees at the crib – the incarnation.
- standing staring up at his body on the cross.
- the joy of the resurrection.
- knowing God's on-going presence with us.

Home is on our knees at this altar where he feeds and nourishes us with his own life for our journey onwards and homewards.