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Church Leaders in talks with the NI Secretary of State on restoring devolution

The leaders of the main Churches in Ireland met with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Karen

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Bradley MP yesterday (Monday 8 October) at Stormont House, Belfast. The meeting took place as the Secretary of State also met with the main political parties to discuss restoring devolution.

Following the meeting, the Church leaders said, “We welcomed the opportunity this morning to meet with the Secretary of State as part of the ongoing process of seeking to restore devolution to Northern Ireland.

“Our discussions today came on the back of our meeting with the political parties a week ago, where we discussed our concerns over the impact of the absence of devolved government in Northern Ireland and the importance of relationships and building trust.

“We also impressed upon on the Secretary of State those same concerns, as we did last week with the party leaders, and reiterated our willingness and desire to assist and support where we could in the challenges that lie ahead. We also emphasised the imperative to find space for ongoing dialogue.”

The Church leaders present were: The Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke (Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland), Rev William Davison (President of the Methodist Church in Ireland), The Most Rev Bishop Noel Treanor, Bishop of Down and Connor (representing The Most Rev Eamon Martin, Catholic Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland), Right Rev Dr Charles McMullen (Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland), The Most Rev Bishop John McDowell, Church of Ireland Bishop of Clogher and past president of the Irish Council of Churches (ICC) (representing Rev Brian Anderson ICC President).

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A parish once again: Dundalk gains “independence” from Armagh

St Patrick’s Parish in Dundalk has been granted “independence” from Armagh after nearly a century and a half.

At a ceremony last Saturday, Archbishop Eamon Martin appointed Fr Mark O’Hagan as the first parish priest of St Patrick’s in 149 years.

Although Armagh is more than 50km away and north of the border, Dundalk has been part of the Parish of Armagh since 1866 when the then-parish priest of Dundalk, Fr Michael Kieran, was elected to the most senior position in the Irish Catholic Church.

At that time, work on St Patrick’s Cathedral in Armagh was still underway – construction had started in 1838, but work came to a halt during the Famine, so the building wasn’t dedicated until 1873 and finally completed until 1904 – so Fr Kieran chose to stay where he was in Dundalk. Thus the town became part of the Armagh parish. A precedent had already been set by Archbishop Paul Cullen, who based himself in Drogheda while he was Archbishop of Armagh.

Following Archbishop Kieran’s death in 1869, Archbishop Daniel McGettigan chose to base himself in Armagh, partly because the cathedral there was nearing completion, but he decided to keep Dundalk under his episcopal wing and St Patrick’s Church, Dundalk, became a mensal church of St Patrick’s Cathedral, Armagh.

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We're Hungry Too from @spck_publishing is a lovely book to help children think about caring for animals and wildlife, and sharing what we have with those less fortunate than ourselves. [https://www.veritasbooksonline.com/were-hungry-too-9780281076727-41537/ ...](https://www.veritasbooksonline.com/were-hungry-too-9780281076727-41537/)

Before he was appointed parish priest at St Patrick's, Fr O'Hagan had been administrator of the parish for seven years.

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The ceremony was a joyous occasion, with Archbishop Martin officiating and hundreds of parishioners present. St Patrick's choir was boosted for the occasion by the choir from the neighbouring parish, St Nicholas'. It was followed by a reception in a marquee erected on the church grounds.

Fr O'Hagan said the event was a great community celebration. In an interview with the *Dundalk Argus* he said, "My ministry is about teamwork. We work as a team. The people of the town have a responsibility for their own church. We all have our own role in believing in the Church and keeping the word of God in the town."

Archdeacon of Glendalough appointed

The appointment of the new Archdeacon of Glendalough has been announced. The Revd Neal O'Raw, Rector of Donoughmore and Donard with Dunlavin, has accepted the invitation of Archbishop Michael Jackson to become Archdeacon in succession to the Ven Ricky Rountree who retired on September 30.

Neal has been serving in West Glendalough since January 2016. Prior to that he served in the United Dioceses of Tuam, Killala and Achonry where he was a Rural Dean. Neal is married to Síobhan and they have three grown up sons.

Making the announcement, Archbishop Jackson noted that Neal was well known and liked in the dioceses.

"Neal's parishes are in the heart of the rural diocese of Glendalough and this is one of the many perspectives he will bring to the work of Archdeacon of Glendalough. His warm personality and strong faith in God have already endeared him

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**The Revd
Neal O’Raw
with
Archbishop
Michael
Jackson.**



to many across the United Dioceses,” he commented.

He added: “In looking forward to working with Neal, who has accepted my invitation to undertake this role, I wish to put on record once again my appreciation of the work of Archdeacon Richard Rountree who has recently retired. To both Neal and Ricky and their families I wish happiness and health long into the future.”

Neal said it was an honour to be offered the role of Archdeacon of the Diocese of Glendalough.

“The Diocese of Glendalough has a rich history within the Church in Ireland, ably ministered by its many Bishops, Archdeacons and clergy. Archdeacon Rountree, in his years of service to the diocese, has left a great legacy to follow, but in doing so I hope to make the role my own,” he stated.

“I feel I have much to offer in experience. Growing up on the Northside of Dublin, in Raheny and Artane, and spending 13 years ministering in Tuam, Killala and Achonry, I believe give me a perspective on the diverse communities, both rural and urban, in the Archdeaconry of Glendalough,”

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he added. “Having worked with the clergy of the Diocese over the past two and a half years, I can see that they have a great heart for the people they serve, and work well together to continue the traditions of this Archdeaconry.”

Neal said that he and Siobhán had been welcomed with open arms by the parishioners of Donoughmore and Donard with Dunlavin and the wider West Wicklow community. They were now looking forward to meeting and getting to know others in the parishes of the diocese.

“The Diocese of Glendalough does not work in isolation, and I look forward to the opportunity to be involved more closely with the workings of the United Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough. I would like to thank Archbishop Michael for this opportunity and I look forward to working with and supporting him in the coming years,” Neal concluded.

Neal and Síobhan have been married for 39 years. In his spare time Neal enjoys tinkering with anything mechanical and carpentry. He also partakes in sea and fly fishing and enjoys anything nautical. He has a keen interest in reading.

The Archdeaconry of Glendalough spans an area from Arklow, Inch and Kilbride in the south to Kilternan in the north and reaches west to Athy and Celbridge and Straffan with Newcastle–Lyons.

Archbishop backs Pope’s Rosary plea

The head of the Catholic Church in Ireland has added his voice to Pope Francis’s call to the faithful to pray the Holy Rosary every day during the month of October.

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Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh said that Ireland has a long tradition and devotion to praying the Rosary within the family.

The Archbishop was speaking from speaking from Rome, where he is attending the Synod on Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment.



“It is a beautiful prayer but there are often misconceptions about the Rosary because it is quite repetitive,” he said. “In every decade of the Rosary we contemplate a different aspect of the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus. I always encourage people to place themselves into the scene of the particular decade as you pray, imagining the feeling and emotions that Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and others experienced during the actual events highlighting Our Lord’s ministry.”

Archbishop Martin pointed out that in Ireland and in more than 40 other countries across the globe, people were gathering at coastal and border locations to recite the Rosary together for Life and for Faith. Organisers of the

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Pray for Alan and Tracey Johnston, Presbyterian CI global mission workers in Italy who have recently completed their four-year assignment in Porto Mantovano, as they undertake deputation this autumn and seek a calling into some form of ministry. <http://bit.ly/2cgVbSa>

international Rosary on the Coast initiative described it as an attempt to form “a Holy League of Nations”.

As reported last week by CatholicIreland.Net, as well as calling for daily recitation of the Rosary this month, Pope Francis is asking that the faithful conclude their recitations with two special prayers.

The first is to Our Lady, *Sub tuum praesidium*: “We fly to thy protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despise our

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petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers, O Glorious and Blessed Virgin.”

The second is a prayer to St Michael the Archangel: “Saint Michael Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil; may God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.”

During the recitation of each decade of the Rosary – comprising the Lord’s Prayer, ten Hail Marys and a Glory Be – Catholics focus on Mysteries, or elements of the life of Our Lord and Our Lady. Since the time of Pope Pius V in the 16th century, there were 15 Mysteries grouped into three sets – the Joyful Mysteries, the Sorrowful Mysteries and the Glorious Mysteries. However, in 2002 Pope John Paul II added a new set of five mysteries, the Luminous Mysteries.

Often, when people recite the Rosary, they offer particular intentions before each decade to ask Our Lady to grant a favour, said Archbishop Martin. These intentions may be to heal a sick person or convert a sinner, to help and guide in times of trouble, illness, financial difficulties, seeking employment or to ask for her help when studying for exams.

The Archbishop said intentions are as varied as the people who pray. “Our Lady loves the prayer of the Rosary. She wants to hear and grant our petitions and requests.

“Especially in this month of the Holy Rosary, we can join in communion and in penitence, as the people of God, in asking Our Lady and Saint Michael the Archangel to protect

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the Church from the devil and in the struggle against evil. I encourage members of the faithful to visit their local grotto or shrine to Our Lady during the month of the Rosary.”

Sunday, 7 October was the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.

Transformation encouragement event in Derry

The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Ken Good, was presented with a gift box full of toy cows on Saturday to acknowledge his diocese’s partnership with the Diocese of Butere in Kenya. The presentation was made by the Bishop of Butere, Rt Rev Dr Tim Wambunya, who is in the north west with his wife, Gertrude, to explore creating living links between parishes in Kenya and Ireland.

Hundreds of parishioners from across the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe converged on the Millennium Forum in Londonderry to celebrate ten years of their diocesan vision, ‘Transforming Community, Radiating Christ’.

The encouragement event – which was hosted superbly by the UTV broadcaster, Paul Clark – was called ‘Transformed: Small Steps, Big Difference’. Among the audience were the Roman Catholic Bishops of Derry and Raphoe, Dr Donal McKeown and Bishop Alan McGuckian; the Moderator of the Derry and Donegal Presbytery, Rev Paul Linkens; and the Minister of Clooney Hall Methodist Church, Rev Richard Johnston.

Bishop Good was also presented with a ‘Major Friendship Award’ by Bishop Wambunya, in appreciation of their two

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dioceses' friendship and partnership over the last four years. During that time, parishes in Derry, Tyrone and Donegal have raised more than £60,000 for the 'Buy a Cow for Butere' initiative which supports clergy there. The two dioceses have an even older bond: over a century ago, the son and daughter of one of Bishop Good's predecessors founded Butere's first Anglican church and its first girls' school.

During an interview on stage by Paul Clark, Bishop Good explained the thinking behind the 'Transforming Community, Radiating Christ' vision: "What I longed for was that we would have some kind of shared sense of belonging, a shared sense of purpose and a renewed sense of vision – that all together, in our diverse areas, we could work together."

"I think it's done pretty well," Bishop Good said, paying tribute to the clergy. "When I launched it to the clergy, they

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Members of the Ballyclare branch of the Royal British Legion were present at Sunday morning's service in Kilbride Parish Church as they presented a new standard to be dedicated in advance of Remembrance Sunday, which this year will mark 100 years since the end of the First World War. The new standard was dedicated by Rev. Canon David Humphries and he is pictured here with the Royal British Legion colour party. The Royal British Legion carries out tremendous work in the caring for those who have suffered as a result of service in the armed forces as well as their dependants.

overwhelmingly endorsed it and said, 'Yes, this is what we're going to go with.' They could've said 'No,' they don't like this, but they said 'Yes.' It's been a burden to them, it's

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meant extra work for them, but they each formed a vision team – or a parish team – and they mobilised people. The Diocesan Vision team gives them ideas and suggestions. We never tell them what to do; it's up to them to shape it. It was a risk – a step of faith; it could've not worked at all; in a way my reputation was on the line because it could have been a fiasco but I'm so pleased."

The address at the event was delivered by Bishop Pat Storey – a former Rector of St Augustine's and ex-member of the Derry and Raphoe Vision Team – who urged the audience to “be the change” they wanted to see.

Recounting the “landmark moment”, recently, when her grandson took his first steps, Bishop Storey said the first steps were the hardest, but once you get going you picked up momentum and speed, and it was like you were never not walking. “Moving forward in Church life isn't unlike this phenomenon,” she said. “We take very tentative steps at first, when we're trying to take onboard a vision plan, but I would encourage you to look at the progress that you have made because I think it [‘Transforming Community, Radiating Christ] is a great slogan – it encapsulates the idea that we need to transform ourselves and that in turn we want to have a hand in transforming the communities around us. And we do that by radiating Christ. It's a simple vision statement, but it has breadth and depth.”

Bishop Storey wondered where the Diocese would have been if nobody had responded to the challenge. “The truth is that if the Diocese had stayed static or taken a step

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backwards, there would be a noticeable big difference, but it wouldn't be the difference you're looking for."

During the event, a film was shown to the audience to illustrate the impact that the 'Cows project' was having in Butere.

The Rector of Donagheady, Rev Dr Robin Stockitt – who has been to Butere – share with the audience his impressions of the Church in Kenya. "I was thinking, 'What was my abiding memory of the Church in Butere?' and the word that comes to mind is joy because when we flew into Nairobi, we got a local flight to a place called Kisumu, on Lake Victoria, and there were hundreds of children around the perimeter of the airport waiting to greet us. It was just overwhelming.

"And then when we got to Bishop Tim's Diocesan headquarters the Mothers' Union were waiting for us, they sang a welcome for us, and then – probably the highlight of the visit – was we had an Ordination Service where I was asked to preach. The Service went on for four hours and there were complaints that it was too short. And afterwards, everybody went outside and they danced and they sang, and I thought this is a place that is so full of vibrancy and joy and love. I went out there thinking I was going to teach, and I was there to give, but I think I was the one who received more than I gave – I received this extraordinary sense of welcome and spontaneity and authenticity and joy, and I hold those memories very dear."

Dr Stockitt said the relationship between the dioceses was mutually enriching and definitely not a one-way relationship. "The fact that we can play a small part in improving the

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lives of your clergy and you can inspire us to be more joyful, then I think that this is a very beautiful relationship.”

Lydia Mons, of Bishops’ Appeal, told the audience that their earlier generosity to the NetsWork project had drastically reduced the incidence of malaria in parts of Nigeria.

“Really, what we want to see is something that doesn’t just impact on people today and make a difference today, but something that we can look on in 10 years’ time, in 20 years’ time, and see the continuing impact and the continuing ripple effect.

“If people remember the NetsWork project that we were involved in. A huge amount of money was raised for mosquito nets in Nigeria. Well, today in Nigeria, in the regions where those mosquito nets were handed out and that intensive training happened, the malaria for children under five alone has halved. It really is something amazing.”

Bishop Good spoke of his gratitude towards the Lord for the rich legacy and history of those who had gone before in the diocese. He was thankful to those present for being in partnership with him, and for taking risks, and for the good-natured way they had responded to ‘Transforming Community, Radiating Christ’.

“I think a lot of people are seeing that now there’s fruit being borne,” Bishop Good said, “there’s a dividend being paid for the risks we have taken in stepping out and doing these things. I believe these are urgent days. These are urgent days for all churches in the West but particularly

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traditional churches. There's no guarantee now, where there used to be, that young people will come and believe and accept what we might have done. One of the former Archbishops of Canterbury, George Carey, said every local church needs to remember that you are one generation away from extinction. That's a sobering kind of message.

“We want to be creative and missional not just for the sake of it but to lead people towards Christ, to have a confidence in the Gospel that Christ transforms you, that Christ transforms churches, that Christ transforms community. And so, as we give thanks for the last 10 years, I want to say, ‘Lord there's so much more ahead that you want to lead us into. This is only the beginning of things in many ways and I want to thank you for being willing to go on this journey.’”

The Catholic bishops of Derry and Raphoe were present.

Photo gallery at -

<https://www.derryandrapphoe.org/news/item/1412-transformed-be-the-change-you-want-to-see>

