

*Address of Bishop Fintan Gavin
at his Episcopal Ordination as
Bishop of Cork and Ross
Cathedral of St. Mary and St. Anne, Cork
Sunday June 30th, 2019 at 3pm.*



Today we have each experienced a wonderful celebration of the whole community of the Diocese of Cork and Ross in this joyful and uplifting liturgy as an expression of the very life of this Diocese. All who gather and participate in different ways represent all that is good about parish, diocese and life, representing all ages, expressions, and diversity of that community life. I greet in a particular way, the community gathered in St. Patrick's Cathedral Skibbereen who through the means of modern technology and iCatholic, thanks to Frs Michael Kelleher, Chris O'Donovan and their team, are able to participate in solidarity, worship, and communion with us here. I look forward to joining you next weekend for Mass and the opportunity to greet you in person.

This afternoon I carry the Pastoral Staff or Crozier symbolising, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, which was created for Bishop Michael Murphy by his parishioners of the Parish of Douglas. For anointings, I will be using the Holy Oil vessels for the sacraments created by his neighbouring people for the Bishop of Ross in 1935. For me they symbolise the continuity of faith and bonds with the faithful local people of the diocese of Cork and Ross. It is for the same reason of the continuity of faith and apostolic succession that I was delighted that Bishop John Buckley agreed to ordain me today together with Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin. Bishop John

has given of himself so generously as your much-loved pastor over the last 21 years. I am personally grateful for the support and warm encouragement that he has given me since the announcement in early April. As he looks forward to a more relaxed pace of life in retirement, I hope that he will be present and active and feel welcome in our diocesan occasions and celebrations in the years ahead. I look forward to continuing to draw on his wisdom and his experience.

I am thankful to the Metropolitan Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly, a native of this city, for his involvement today.

To Archbishop Diarmuid Martin who has been my bishop for the last 15 years. I am grateful to him and to his predecessor Cardinal Connell for the many life-giving opportunities I have been trusted with in ministry as a priest over the last 28 years. I am particularly grateful to Archbishop Diarmuid Martin for his kindness and his practical advice and support in these months of preparation.

I would like to thank Archbishop Jude Okolo, Pope Francis' representative in Ireland, for his presence here today and for his kindness over these last three months. I appreciate the presence of Archbishop Eamon Martin, Primate of All Ireland and the many other bishops who concelebrated today.

St. Paul in the second reading speaks about our common baptism in the one Spirit. I greet and welcome our ecumenical representatives: Bishop Paul Colton, Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, Reverend Denis Maguire, Methodist Church and the Members of Cork Ecumenical Standing Committee.

To all the priests and deacons from the Diocese of Cork and Ross and those who travelled from Dublin and the many others who have travelled from further afield, your presence and your participation today is greatly valued.

The thing that has struck me most since I arrived here in the Cathedral on the eight of April for the announcement has been the generous heartfelt welcome and offer of support of so many people in Cork City and County including from the many letters and cards of welcome and encouragement, especially from the priests.

This was captured in the letter from Joseph from West Cork who was preparing for his Confirmation when he wrote to offer me his good wishes and tell me that he and his family visited Knock and he prayed for me there and would continue to pray for me each day.

And when I travelled to Lourdes for the last time as chaplain with the Dublin Diocesan Children's Pilgrimage, I met with Cormac, Marie, Sean and Jodie who presented the gifts for the Eucharist today and the other members of the Cork 126 Group from the Irish Children's Pilgrimage Trust. They invited me for Lunch at their hotel and presented me with my first Cork flag, which I treasure.

Meister Eckhart, the Dominican Mystic once said, "if the only prayer you say is thank you, that would be enough".

My prayer is a prayer of thanks and gratitude to so many today.

I am fortunate to have both my parents here today. I am grateful to them for all they gave to my brothers, sisters and myself through their selfless generosity and love and through their own example, sharing the gifts of faith and love.

I am fortunate to have very supportive family and close friends who have and continue to support me in ministry.

To those who have travelled from the United States of America, Italy, England, Scotland, Wales and so many parts of Ireland, thank you for your presence here today.

So many people in so many different ways have worked so generously to ensure that today's celebration would be welcoming, prayerful, joyful and uplifting.

The stewards, the hospitality, so many different groups of volunteers and an Garda Síochána.

I would like to pay special tribute to Fr Michael Keohane, Brid Mc Sorley and Maura O'Flynn, Elaine Williams and all those working in the Diocesan Offices; to Frs John O'Donovan and Damian O'Mahony and the whole team of Cathedral staff, volunteers and parishioners.

Mgr Aidan O Driscoll and Fr Tom Hayes for our liturgical booklet and for all who collaborated with Fr Tom in the communications aspects of today.

Fr Christy Fitzgerald our Master of Ceremonies assisted by Frs Damian Mc Neice, Peter O'Kane O.P., and Turlough Baxter.

St Augustine reminds us that to sing is to pray twice. To Ann Roche, Ciaran Coll and the members of the Cathedral Choir and the Our Lady of Victories Gospel Choir and band, Joe Higgins, the Cathedral organist, the group of Irish Traditional Musicians and the other musicians, the Cork Deaf Community Choir, John Casey and the students from Scoil Eoin, Ballincollig Junior Choir, and the students from Mayfield Community School, and to Giovanna Feeley our cantor. All the choirs and musicians working together to create such a prayerful and uplifting liturgy for our participation.

To Fr Robert Young for his thought provoking and encouraging homily.

There were so many involved in so many different ways in today's ordination liturgy - to each and every one of you I want to say a heartfelt thank you.

Today as we begin a new chapter in our Diocesan story, we celebrate and give thanks for all that has been done to allow our parishes to be active and faith filled communities. We set out anew, building on all that great work through the years, together as priests,

permanent deacons, religious and all the people of the diocese, as we collaboratively find new ways of witnessing to the Gospel message confronting with faith, hope and determination in joyful witness the many challenges that face our diocese and Church today.

We need to promote a culture of vocational discernment and consideration of all of the Christian vocations to love and service. We are fortunate to have in Cork and Ross, dedicated, hardworking and faithful priests who continue to give generous service, but they are a group that are getting smaller. We need to actively go out of our way to encourage, foster, nourish and promote vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life.

We are very conscious today of one of those great priests who went back to the Lord on Thursday last, Canon Kieran Twomey, parish priest of Blackrock. On behalf of all of us I pray for those who love Kieran and mourn him that they will be comforted and continue to be consoled.

The priesthood is a challenging but wonderfully fulfilling life. We need to help young men, all those who feel that Jesus may be calling them to follow him as priests, to hear and respond to God's call to priesthood. Priests come from our families and as families we must nurture and support those vocations.

Pope Francis continually reminds us that the mission of the Church, the People of God is to go beyond itself, to be open and welcoming, reaching out to those on the margins and the peripheries, going towards the last, the lost, and least among us – who are at the very heart of the mission of the living Body of Christ, the Church in the world. He names among those on the margins as the hungry, the unemployed, those in prison, those who have lost their faith. As a Christian community if we are to be authentic, we need to be in solidarity and reach out in concrete action. To those who have lost their faith or are struggling to hang on in there particularly because of the awful things that individuals or institutions have done in the name of the Church, we need to stretch out a hand of dialogue and listening so that their voices are heard - so that we can apologise once again and learn from the awful things that were allowed to happen. We can never allow this to happen again.

Deep gratitude goes out to all priests, sisters, brothers, deacons, all who serve in our parishes as staff and volunteers who have worked with great dedication in order to change this and to make our parishes and diocesan places safer for children and vulnerable adults. I want to acknowledge the work of Cleo Yates, Director of Safeguarding and her committee for all the work they have done to make this happen. We stand in solidarity with survivors and their families and we continue our commitment and vigilance to the protection and safeguarding of children in our Church and in society.

Pope Francis in his recent Encouragement to young people *Christus Vivit, Christ Is Alive* reminds us that young people are not just the future of the Church but also its' present. As he puts it, "You are the 'Now of God'."

It's great to see so many young people here today. You as young people are the best missionaries and witnesses to other young people. As we listen to young people, we need to support them in their faith so they can be the Church, the People of God of now and of the future.

Pope Francis concludes the papal mandate read earlier by Canon John O'Donovan with an invitation: Speaking to me as your Bishop and to the people of the Diocese he says "May you give one another an example of mutual charity and be able to set out with one accord on the path of renewal."

Today we begin that path of renewal together.

As missionary disciples of Jesus, entrusted with his message, as married and single people, religious, deacons and priests in our complimentary service as the People of God, the living Church, we begin that renewal by living our faith in our parishes and in the market square as we look out for those on the margins – as the brave, daring and inspired Venerable Nano Nagle put it, "love one another as you have hitherto done' and also 'love the poor'. We recognise Jesus in his Word, in the Eucharist and each of the Sacraments, in each other, and in our own hearts.

Míle Buíochas. Thank you.

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