

Bulletin 7th July 2024

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The Irish Catholic Martyrs June 20th

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Summer Dues 2024

Auxiliary Bishop Donal Roche

Address of Bishop Donal Roche

I wish to thank his Excellency, Archbishop Montemayor, Archbishop Farrell, as well as the other archbishops and

bishops for welcoming me among your number today. I am quite overwhelmed and feel undeserving of the honour that has been bestowed on me. I thank my priest friends and colleagues from the diocese and from all over the country for your support and encouragement. But most of all I want to thank you, my family, friends and parishioners from all the various appointments I have had on the way to this day.

They say that when you are dying, your life flashes before your eyes. It feels a little like that today to see people from every stage of my life assembled here together: brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, in-laws and cousins; friends from my school days and friends I have made along the way – from schools in Coolock and Tallaght, parishes of Lucan South, Wicklow and Cabinteely; friends made during many summers in Donegal, and various others who were part of my journey. I am thankful for all the conversations and celebrations, the breaking of bread in various kitchens and dining rooms as well as sharing at the table of the Eucharist in so many places and on so many occasions. I have been greatly enriched by all these encounters and I thank you all sincerely for the great blessing you have been in my life. I am very thankful to my late parents, for all they have given me, but particularly for the gift of faith.

From quite early in my life I have been inspired by the Gospel and have spent my life as a priest trying to get to know the person of Jesus and trying to follow his teaching. The motto I have chosen as a bishop is inspired by a line from the psalms 'Your word is a lamp for my steps and a light for my path'. I have shortened it to 'Do Bhriathar Mo Sholas' – 'Your Word is my light'. While continually inspired by the Gospel, I can't say I have always lived it well, but it never fails to encourage me, and it never fails to give me hope, urging me to begin again.

Today has been a wonderful celebration for the church in the Archdiocese and I am very thankful to all the people who

worked so hard to make it possible – those responsible for the liturgy and the music, the servers and welcomers, and all those working behind the scenes making sure everything was prepared and ready. You have worked enormously hard and I am very grateful to you all.

But what about tomorrow? When the celebrations are over there's work to be done and I am very aware of the huge task ahead. We face enormous challenges as a church for which there are no easy solutions. In recent weeks, people have been asking me what are your views on this or that or what will you do about the various challenges we face? People are rightly worried about declining vocations, the shortage of young people in the church, the changing face of parish life and so many other issues. I don't come with ready-made answers, but I come with an open heart, a willingness to listen, an enthusiasm for the mission ahead and most of all, I come with hope for the future.

My hope is to remain faithful to the Gospel myself and continue to preach it to the best of my ability. I hope that, with Bishop Paul, I will be a support to Archbishop Farrell and to the priests of the diocese as we plan for a future that is going to look very different from the church into which we were originally ordained. I hope to be a source of hope and encouragement to the faithful of the diocese who are living out their baptismal calling in parishes throughout the diocese. And I hope to be able to make connections with young people who are open to the call of God, those who are seeking faith, those who may be disillusioned or hurt or wounded.

I don't mean this to sound like a political speech or an election manifesto but, unlike a politician seeking election, I am not claiming any special strength or qualities of my own. My hope and my strength come from the promise of Jesus to his disciples which we heard in the Gospel today. He sent them out make disciples of the nations, not by their own strength, but with the strength of the Holy Spirit. And with the promise

'know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time'.

+Donal Roche

Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin

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