

Words of Bishop Brendan Kelly welcoming the appointment of Bishop Michael Duignan as Bishop of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora

'Bíodh lúcháir ort, a Iarúsailéim, bíodh áthas oraibh, lucht a páirte...' (Isáia 66.10)

Is maith an lá é seo don deoiseas seo, agus cosúil leis an fáidh Isáia fadó ag caint le cathair Iarúsailéim, bíodh lúchair orainn: tá an Pápa Proinnsias, faoi anáil an Spioraid Naomh, tréis aoire nua a chuir chugainn.

Fáiltím go fial mar sin inniu roimh ionadaí an Phápa, An t-Ardeaspag Jude Thaddeus Okolo, atá tagtha chugainn leis an deá-scéal. Fáiltím go mór ar bhúr son ar fad roimh an t-Easpag Mícheál Ó Duibhgeannáin, easpag nua Na Gaillimhe, Cill Mhic Duaich agus Cill Fhionnúrach. Go mba fada buan thú, a Easpaig Mhichíl, inár measc. Guímíd beannacht Dé ort, agus faoi choimirce Muire Máthair go raibh tú agus aoireacht an deoise seo á ghlacadh agat inniu.

'Rejoice, Jerusalem, be glad for her, all you who love her...' (Is 66.10)

Like the prophet Isaiah of old in the first line of the first reading for this feast-day of our Lady of Lourdes 2022, we in our turn can cry out today 'Rejoice, Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora, and be glad for her, all you who love her...', for the Holy Father Pope Francis, prompted by the Holy Spirit, has sent us a new shepherd.

On behalf of the people of God of these dioceses and the priests, I warmly welcome you, Archbishop Okolo, who have come to us with this good news today; and I warmly and particularly welcome you, Bishop Michael, as new shepherd and father of this diocesan community. We pray the blessing of the Holy Trinity on you as you assume this further onerous responsibility entrusted to you by the Lord through the Holy Father, and we pray Mary, Mother of the Church, to be with you as protector, comforter and guide.

Four years ago on this same feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes, I was privileged to be installed here as Bishop in the diocese for which I was ordained almost 51 years ago, and had spent all of a very happy and varied priestly ministry. The call to return here as Bishop from the diocese of Achonry was a surprise to say the least. Today I am full of gratitude to God for these short years as bishop of a people and place that I love and would always call home. And with all my heart, I thank the people and the priests of the diocese for their welcome, support, generosity to me, their tolerance and above all your prayers.

I consider it providential that just as this feast of Our Lady of Lourdes marked the beginning of my episcopal ministry here four years ago, so this day marks the announcement of its completion. That can only be a source of peace and great confidence for me now as I prepare to hand the reins over, as it were, to you, Bishop Michael. The loving hand of Providence it is that has chosen you for this diocese now in 2022, and we can only be grateful and rejoice.

On a personal note, I am delighted with your appointment. Having worked with you since my days in Achonry and particularly these last few years since your appointment to Clonfert, I can assure the people of this diocese of your capacity for diligent and careful work, your generosity and willingness to listen, and above all, your deep trust in God and your commitment to serving Him first, so that you may be the people's good servant too, after the heart of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ himself. There is much work to be done, in what Pope Francis identifies as a whole 'new era' in the life of the Church. Fear not. The strength of God is with you. I can assure you the faithful, priests and people, of this diocese of Galway Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora will welcome you with joy and will sustain you every day with their prayers.

Mar sin, a Easpaig Mhichíl, guím neart agus rath Dé ort anois is tú i mbun an chinnireacht atá. bronnta ort san obair chinniúnach atá romhat i nGaillimh, Cill Mac Duach agus Cill Fhionnúrach, comh maith le Cluain Fearta