



The final steps on a Pilgrim's Journey – January 5th, 2010

The snows of January glistened in the headlights as we set out before dawn on the long journey to Armagh for the funeral of Cardinal Cahal B. Daly. Approaching the city, the tall slender twin spires of St Patrick's Cathedral were visible above the snowy streets.

Around us were people arriving from all parts including Sisters of Mercy from Granard and priests from Longford and all over the diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois, Albert Reynolds, John Hume, John Bruton, the President and the Taoiseach, representatives of the Queen, political leaders from all sides and hundreds of people from Armagh and far beyond, all there to pay tribute to the life and work of Cardinal Cahal B. Daly. Stewards and police directed us to the main door of the Cathedral where ushers warmly welcomed us, showed us to our seats and gave us the Mass booklet with the Cardinal's red hat, coat of arms and motto *Jesus Christus Heriot Hodie* on the cover.

Before the altar, Priests stood in honour guard by the coffin, on which rested his red berretta, book of the Scriptures and the crucifix. Close by sat his family and close friends. The Cathedral looked magnificent and doubly so as I tried to blank out the inferno of our own St Mel's just a few days before. The atmosphere was one of warmth and solemnity, of unity and peace. As the aisles filled you had a



● L to R - Back Row Pat Farrell, Peadar O'Donnell, Fr. Tom Healy, Sr. Angela Bracken, Gerry Meenaghan and Leo Donlon L to R - Front Row Kitty Hughes, Sean Maguire, Cardinal Cahal Daly and Sr. Berchmans. Inset - Peter Walsh and Tom Chapman - two members of group who were unable to travel on the day.

great sense of an all Ireland gathering, for truly he was Primate of All Ireland and representatives from all Ireland and beyond had come to walk the last 'Steps of his Pilgrim Journey' here in Armagh.

As the choir sang *Be thou my Vision* the great procession began, white

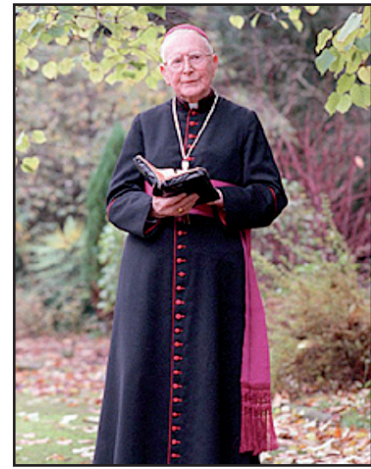
surpliced priests, monks, bishops and archbishops, leaders of many churches and finally the Cardinals. Chief celebrant was Cardinal Sean Brady his successor, who had lost a dear friend and mentor. 'We come here to day to say farewell to Cardinal Cahal Daly, first and foremost a man of faith, a

man of prayer, a man of God'. As the Mass continued reminders of Cardinals Daly's life's work flooded back; Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois, developer of *The Children of God* programme for primary schools, founder of *Christus Rex*, Bishop of Down and Connor, Cardinal of Armagh and all Ireland, teacher, writer, scholar and tireless promoter of peace.

Bishop Colm O'Reilly was one of the chief concelebrants, his nephew Fr Brian Daly read the Gospel and Dennis Glennon represented our diocese at the offertory procession. A special tribute was read from Pope Benedict. Approaching the altar to receive Holy Communion we were able to pause briefly at his coffin. Then after the final prayers the great procession wound its way out of the church into the chill January air. They carried his coffin shoulder high round the icy path he had so often trod during his years there. His family followed along with hundreds of priests, bishops and dignitaries.

We gathered under the trees in the strong winter sunshine as they gently laid him to rest in the snow covered earth beside his predecessor Cardinal O'Fiach. Then in one final salute the whole host of his brother priests sang *Salve Regina*, the traditional funeral hymn for priests.

Handshakes of sympathy then with Cardinal Daly's sorrowing fam-



The late Cardinal Cahal B Daly.

ily and a warm embrace from his tearful aide James Donnelly. It was time to go home. In the crowd we became separated and found ourselves almost at *Ara Coeli*. As we doubled back we met Cardinal Brady who warmly shook hands and bade us welcome to dinner. But a look at the sky and the icy roads counselled otherwise. Driving out the gates in slow convoy and noting the many LD cars, we saw Tommie Gorman interviewing John Hume for TV. We had been part of history. *Ni bheidh a léithéid ann arís. Eternal rest grant unto him O Lord. Amen.*

Reflections on an anniversary

As we approach the first anniversary of the fire that destroyed so much of the fabric of St. Mel's Cathedral on Christmas day, 2009 our thoughts turn to another first anniversary – that of the death of a man who was inextricably linked with the cathedral, Cardinal Cahal Daly, Archbishop Emeritus of Armagh.

On 16th July, 1967 Rev. Cahal Brendan Daly, a priest of the diocese of Down and Connor, and a philosophy lecturer in Queen's University, Belfast, was ordained bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois. St. Mel's was to be his Cathedral for the next fifteen years.

Early in 1972 Bishop Daly set out on the long and sometimes painful journey that culminated in 1977 with the reordering of the Cathedral sanctuary in accordance with the liturgical renewal of the second Vatican Council: "This" he states in his memoir "was the highlight of my involvement in the building and reconstruction of churches". In the years that followed, Bishop Daly, in his capacity as chairman of The National Advisory Committee on Sacred Art and Architecture, and in his thirty years as a bishop in three different dioceses, made a major contribution to church architecture in Ireland.

In the late summer and early autumn of 1979 Bishop Daly was heavily involved in all aspects of the preparations for the visit of Pope John Paul II to Ireland, often shuttling over and back to Rome on a weekly basis. He was overjoyed when it was decided that the Pope would visit Clonmacnois to honour the great monastic and missionary tradition of the early Irish church. The bishop has written movingly about this historic event:

"I shall never forget the scene of the Pope kneeling in prayer before the altar in the new sanctuary in Clonmacnois, and the symbolism of his holding in his hand the thousand

year old crozier of St. Mel, younger contemporary of St. Patrick and first bishop of Ardagh.

Today, a small bronze plaque marks this spot. It states simply "Pope John Paul II prayed here. September 30th 1979".

Saying "no" never came easy to Bishop Daly. He had heavy commitments on behalf of the Irish Episcopal Conference at National and International level. He was much in demand as a speaker at conferences at home and abroad and all the while he was dedicated to his work as bishop in the forty one parishes in his far flung diocese.

His ever growing workload must have been a contributory factor in the heart attack that he suffered on the 4th February, 1982. He refers to this as "his longest day" and the journey by car to St. Vincent's Hospital in Dublin as "the most anxious journey of my life". While still in the early stages of his recovery the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Alibrandi conveyed to him that it was the Holy Father's wish that he should be Bishop of Down and Connor. His response – "God's will be done". Following eight fruitful years in his native diocese "ministering in the midst of conflict" he had once again to respond to God's call. In December 1990 he was installed as Archbishop of Armagh and the following year was named Cardinal Primate of All Ireland.

Throughout the fourteen years in his two Northern dioceses Cardinal Daly kept in close contact with his first diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois. He visited his father's native parish of Keadue every year; the priests, religious and lay groups remained on his mailing list, and in his thoughts and prayers, especially at times of bereavement.

Following his retirement in 1996 the Cardinal set about putting his papers in order, he published his book

"Memories and Reflections : Footsteps On My Pilgrim Journey" and many other works on prayer, spirituality and ecology.

During the severe winter of 2009 Cardinal Daly, now in his ninety third year, developed what was to be his final illness. He was hospitalised but rallied sufficiently to return to his home in Belfast under the watchful eye of his long-time personal carer James Donnelly.

The ailing cardinal was deeply affected by the news that filtered through from Longford on Christmas

day, 2009. It was left to Bishop Colm O'Reilly to acquaint him with the full scale of the disaster. Bishop Colm, in a letter to the people of his diocese in January 2010 touched upon his last painful telephone conversation with his venerable predecessor: "I say with sadness that hearing the full extent of the damage done left him shattered. There is every likelihood that this may have hastened his end"

Cardinal Cahal Daly died on 31st December 2009, six days after the destruction by fire of his first Cathedral of St. Mel.

Fr. Seán Casey.



Longford Victim Support was founded in 1998. It is a community based voluntary organisation. We give free and confidential help to victims of crime, their family, friends and anyone else affected. We give information, emotional support and practical help. You don't have to report a crime to the police to get our help and can get support at any time, whether it be immediately after the crime or much later. We are not a government agency or part of the police.

This service will not cost you anything and confidentiality is guaranteed.

Volunteers

We are not professionals nor are we counsellors but we are a listening service for those who wish to tell their story or need our assistance.

How can we be contacted?

Our number is 043 33 47422 or you may contact your local Garda Station who will assist you and where our number will be made available to you or your local Guard will make contact with us for you with your permission. Alternatively, you can contact **The National Crime Victims Helpline TEXT 085 1337711** or **The National Helpline number is 1850 211407**. They in turn will refer on to the nearest branch

Effects of Crime

Court Support Service

In the event where they must attend court, we can help them through this process as well. Very often going to court can be as traumatic as the original crime itself.

Families of Murder Victims Service

Some of our members have also had further training in dealing with families of Murder victims, which unfortunately we hear about now every day of the week.

We are also available to give talks to groups about what we do and some helpful hints on crime prevention

Work of Human Hands

Out of every misfortune there comes an opportunity

"Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart, and wait for the LORD"
(Psalm 27:14).

These words inspired the craftsman of Duignan's, (Irish Contract Seating) in Dromod to transform the carbonised and charred wood of one of the Cathedral rafters into a cross. This cross now stands at the entrance to the new Cathedral Centre, a tall and strong symbol of our faith in God.

