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THE BISHOP OF LICHFIELD

24th October 2020

The Rt Revd Bishop of Cork, Cloyne & Ross

Bishop's Palace

Bishop Street

CORK

T12 WEY1

IRELAND

Dear Bishop Paul,

I write, on behalf of the people, clergy and Cathedral of Lichfield, to send you warm fraternal greetings as you celebrate the 150th anniversary of the consecration of the present St Fin Barre's Cathedral. That glorious building shares with our Cathedral here the distinction of being adorned by three beautiful spires. Moreover, at the time that your Cathedral was being built to the design of William Burges, ours was undergoing extensive restoration and renewal under the oversight of Gilbert Scott. You were ahead of us, though; the west front here was not completed until after Scott's death in 1878.

You were also ahead of us in your original foundation, though we both owe the planting of the Christian faith in our respective sees to great monks of the seventh century who were endowed with apostolic zeal. Your St Fin Barre had by 606 settled beside the great marsh of Munster on the site which was to be his 'place of resurrection'. It was not until 669 that our St Chad came to establish his monastic community above the boggy ground which is now Minster Pool. Before that, we know of Chad, a Northumbrian by birth, that 'for his greater improvement in sacred letters and divine contemplation he passed into Ireland'. It was a wise move of Chad; maybe on his Hibernian peregrinations he spent time in Cork.

Then, as now, and as a century and a half ago, these great buildings have meaning only as a sign of the faith which we share. At its heart is a conviction of the truth and the hope of the resurrection, so boldly proclaimed by the golden angel on the pinnacle of your sanctuary. Bede relates that a week before Chad died he was visited by a company of angels, singing the songs which were to be his in his heavenly homeland. It is for us a joy and an encouragement to know that as resurrection people we in the English Midlands and you in Munster share in a common pilgrimage in the footsteps of Fin Barre and Chad.



DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD



DISCOVERING
THE HEART OF GOD



GROWING
IN GRACE



REACHING
FOR ADORATION



TRANSFORMING
COMPLEXITY



PRACTISING
GENEROSITY

The Church of England **around Staffordshire, northern Shropshire and the Black Country**



Towards the end of this year of grace 2020, it can feel that the journey for both of us is leading through uncharted and at times perilous territory. The ravages of the Coronavirus pandemic and of the restrictions imposed to contain it will continue to shape new challenges for us for some time ahead. In the wake of this country's withdrawal from the European Union, the links between our two islands are in urgent need of safeguarding and renewal. As companies of those who seek to live out the Christian faith in the way that Anglicans have received and interpreted it, both our dioceses are having to contend with the reality of inexorable demographic, financial and societal changes. I very much welcome the opportunities which our developing companionship gives us to explore all these issues together, to support one another in prayer, and to encourage one another through friendship, exchange and the sharing of good practice.

I am deeply grateful for the way in which God's grace is bringing us together in Cork and Lichfield, and I congratulate you, the Dean and Chapter of Cork, and all your clergy and people on this auspicious anniversary. I look forward to a growing bond between the people of Fin Barre and the people of Chad as we journey together in hope of the resurrection. I assure you of our prayers for you, and I ask for your prayers for us.

Your brother in Christ,

+Michael Igrave

Dean Adrian joins me in sending greetings, and wishes to assure you that the 150th anniversary of the consecration of St Fin Barre's will be marked in our Cathedral on 30th November, when we will pray for the mission and ministry of your Cathedral and Diocese, and for your apostolic ministry.



**DIOCESE OF
LICHFIELD**



DISCOVERING
OUR SHARED FAITH



SOWING
SEEDS



REACHING
FOR THE FRONTIERS



TRANSFORMING
OURSELVES



PRACTISING
HOSPITALITY