



Down and Connor Diocesan Appointments

21st July 2023

Having reviewed the pastoral needs of the people of the Diocese of Down and Connor, the Apostolic Administrator, Bishop Donal McKeown, announces the following retirements and has made the following appointments which **take effect from Saturday 19th August**:

Retirements

Very Rev Anthony Alexander	to be Pastor Emeritus .
Very Rev Paul Alexander	to be Pastor Emeritus .
Very Rev Anthony Curran	to be Pastor Emeritus and to assist as Priest in partial ministry and resident in St Colmcille's, Ballyhackamore
Very Rev Patrick McWilliams	to be Pastor Emeritus and to assist as Priest in partial ministry and resident in Cargin .

Administrators¹

Very Rev Gerard Fox	in addition to his appointment as Diocesan Secretary to be Administrator Ballyclare
Very Rev Canon John Murray	in addition to being Parish Priest of Downpatrick, to be Administrator Saul
Very Rev James O'Reilly	to be Administrator Duneane
Very Rev Joseph Rooney	in addition to his appointment as Judicial Vicar to be Administrator Portglenone
Very Rev Robert Sloan	to be Administrator Ardkeen

¹ When a Diocesan See is vacant an Administrator may not appoint a Parish Priest unless the See is vacant for a year (cf can 525, 2^o).

Assistant Priests (Curates)

Rev David Aksenczuk	to be CC Antrim and to be nominated to the Northern Trust (HSCNI) for Chaplaincy duties in Antrim Area Hospital
Rev Andrew Black	to St Mary's University College, Belfast and to assist at weekends in the West Belfast Pastoral Community
Rev Edward McGee	in addition to his appointment in St Mary's University College, Belfast , to provide assistance at weekends across the Diocese according to need.
Rev Robert McMahon	to be CC Downpatrick and resident in Saul
Rev John O'Laverty	to be CC Holy Family and assist in the Armagh Inter-Diocesan Marriage Tribunal (Down and Connor Office)

Diocesan Administration

During a period of *sede vacante*, the office of Vicar General ceases. An Apostolic Administrator may, however, confer delegated power to a Vicar General until a new Bishop takes possession of the See.² To assist in the ongoing governance of the diocese, and having consulted the College of Consultors, I have delegated the powers of a Vicar General to the **Very Rev Canon John Murray PP**, Downpatrick and **Very Rev Eugene O'Hagan**, Chancellor, both of whom possess delegated executive authority within the diocese.

I would like to record my thanks to all involved in and affected by these appointments for their co-operation and I wish them God's blessing, good health and fulfilment in their respective ministries.

On behalf of the faithful of the diocese, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Very Rev Anthony Alexander, the Very Rev Paul Alexander, the Very Rev Anthony Curran and the Very Rev Canon Patrick McWilliams who have relinquished the office of Parish Priest after many years of ministry and fruitful service. With the people of the diocese, I am very grateful to them for their willingness to be of continued pastoral service to the diocese as their circumstances permit.

I also express my gratitude for the ministries of the **Rev Kieran Creagh C.P.**, who continues to temporarily Administer the parish of Sacred Heart, the **Rev Gary Donegan C.P.**, recently appointed as Administrator of Holy Cross Parish, Ardoyne, the **Rev Derek Kearney S.M.A.** who continues to temporarily Administer the parish of St Teresa's, the **Rev Paschal Kearney C.S.Sp.** who assists in ministry in the parish of Ramoan (Ballycastle-Rathlin Island) and the **Rev Patrick O'Keefe C.Ss.R.**, recently appointed Administrator of St Gerard's Parish.

'The Harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest.' (Luke 10:2) As the clergy of the diocese take up these new appointments, and as they continue to serve the sacramental and pastoral needs throughout the diocese, I commend us all to continue to pray for vocations.

² The *Apostolic Administrator sede vacante* - Directory for Pastoral Ministry of Bishops "*Apostolorum Successores*" No. 244.

Prayer for Vocations

Loving and Generous God, it is You who call us by name and ask us to follow you.

Help us to grow in the Love and service of our Church as we experience it today.

Give us the energy and courage of Your Spirit to shape its future.

Grant us faith-filled leaders who will embrace Christ's Mission of love and justice.

Bless the Church by raising up dedicated and generous leaders from our families and friends who will serve Your people as Sisters, Priests, Brothers, Permanent Deacons and Lay Ministers.

Inspire us to know You better and open our hearts to hear Your call.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

✠ Donal McKeown

Apostolic Administrator of Down and Connor